



*ALFRED AYRES*



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# THE VERBALIST

## *A MANUAL*

DEVOTED TO BRIEF DISCUSSIONS OF THE RIGHT  
AND THE WRONG USE OF WORDS

AND TO SOME OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THOSE WHO  
WOULD SPEAK AND WRITE WITH PROPRIETY

BY

ALFRED AYRES

We remain shackled by timidity till we have learned to  
speak with propriety.—JOHNSON.

As a man is known by his company, so a man's company  
may be known by his manner of expressing himself.—SWIFT.

*NEW AND REVISED EDITION, MUCH ENLARGED*



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## PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION.

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I KNOW I have succeeded in making this book much larger than it was in the previous editions, and I think I have succeeded in making it as much better as I have made it larger. It certainly is now by far the most comprehensive book of its kind in the language.

I have gathered the new matter, little by little, during the last five or six years, and I trust that little has escaped me that I ought to have gathered.

Of the new matter, there is nothing that is newer, or possibly of more importance, than what will be found under the heading Noun-Construction.

If the book is now not so good as it should be, then—it should have had another author.

A. A.

NEW YORK, *January, 1896.*

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## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

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THE title-page sufficiently sets forth the end this little book is intended to serve.

For convenience' sake I have arranged in alphabetical order the subjects treated of, and for economy's sake I have kept in mind that "he that uses many words for the explaining of any subject doth, like the cuttle-fish, hide himself in his own ink."

The curious inquirer who sets himself to look for the learning in the book is advised that he will best find it in such works as George P. Marsh's Lectures on the English Language, Fitz-Edward Hall's Recent Exemplifications of False Philology, and Modern English, Richard Grant White's Words and Their Uses, Edward S. Gould's Good English,

William Mathews' Words: their Use and Abuse, Dean Alford's The Queen's English, George Washington Moon's Bad English, and The Dean's English, Blank's Vulgarisms and Other Errors of Speech, Alexander Bain's English Composition and Rhetoric, Bain's Higher English Grammar, Bain's Composition Grammar, Quackenbos' Composition and Rhetoric, John Nichol's English Composition, William Cobbett's English Grammar, Peter Bullion's English Grammar, Goold Brown's Grammar of English Grammars, Graham's English Synonymes, Bigelow's Hand-book of Punctuation, and other kindred works.

Suggestions and criticisms are solicited, with the view of profiting by them in future editions.

If The Verbalist receive as kindly a welcome as its companion volume, The Orthoëpist, has received, I shall be content.

A. A.

NEW YORK, *October, 1881.*

ESCHEW fine words as you would rouge.—HARE.

Cant is properly a double-distilled lie ; the second power of a lie.—CARLYLE.

If a gentleman be to study any language, it ought to be that of his own country.—LOCKE.

In language the unknown is generally taken for the magnificent.—RICHARD GRANT WHITE.

He who has a superlative for everything, wants a measure for the great or small.—LAVATER.

Inaccurate writing is generally the expression of inaccurate thinking.—RICHARD GRANT WHITE.

To acquire a few tongues is the labor of a few years ; but to be eloquent in one is the labor of a life.—ANONYMOUS.

Words and thoughts are so inseparably connected that an artist in words is necessarily an artist in thoughts.—WILSON.

It is an invariable maxim that words which add nothing to the sense or to the clearness must diminish the force of the expression.—CAMPBELL.

Propriety of thought and propriety of diction are commonly found together. Obscurity of expression generally springs from confusion of ideas.—MACAULAY.



## THE VERBALIST.

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**A.** Errors are not infrequently made by omitting to repeat the article in a sentence. It should always be repeated before an adjective that qualifies a distinct thing. "He has a black and white horse." If two horses is meant, it is clear that it should be, "He has a black and *a* white one."

"The creed supposes the coexistence of a benevolent and [a] malevolent principle." A principle can not be at once benevolent and malevolent.

"Something is said of the speculative doubts and difficulties through which he won his way to a more settled and [a] happier frame of mind." The repetition here is not imperative ; it is simply a question of euphony.

Sometimes pleonastic :

"No stronger and stranger *a* figure than his is described in our modern history of England." Not only is the *a* here superfluous, but the sentence is otherwise most clumsily constructed. It is bettered thus : "No figure stronger and stranger than his is described," etc. ; or, "No figure is described in our modern history of England stronger and stranger than his."

**Ability—Capacity.** The distinctions between these two words are not always observed by those who use them. "*Capacity* is the power of receiving and retaining knowledge with facility ; *ability* is the power of applying knowl-

edge to practical purposes. Both these faculties are requisite to form a great character: capacity to conceive, and ability to execute designs. Capacity is shown in quickness of apprehension. Ability supposes something done; something by which the mental power is exercised in executing, or performing, what has been perceived by the capacity."—Graham's English Synonymes.

**Abortive.** An outlandish use of this word may be occasionally met with, especially in the newspapers. "A lad was yesterday caught in the act of *abortively* appropriating a pair of shoes." That is abortive that is untimely, that has not been borne its full time, that is immature. We often hear *abortion* used in the sense of failure, but never by those who study to express themselves in chaste English.

**Above.** There is little authority for using this word as an adjective or as a noun. Such expressions as "the *above* statement" or "it seems from the *above*" are not sanctioned by careful writers. It is better to say, "the *foregoing* or *preceding* statement, or paragraph." Such expressions as the *above-mentioned*, the *above referred to*, and the *above related* are perhaps permissible, but the diction would be bettered by using *already* instead of *above*.

*Above* is also used inelegantly for *more than*; as, "above a mile," "above a thousand"; also inelegantly used for *beyond*; as, "above his strength."

"The floor of it was not much *above* [more than] a hundred feet across."—Hammond.

**Accept of.** We are not without authority for the locution *accept of*, nevertheless the *of* is unnecessary, no matter what sense the verb is used in. We *accept* presents, not *accept of* them.

**Accident.** See CASUALTY.

**Accord.** "He [the Secretary of the Treasury] was shown through the building, and the information he desired was *accorded* him."—Reporters' English.

"The heroes prayed, and Pallas from the skies  
*Accords* their vow."—Pope.

The goddess of wisdom, when she granted the prayers of her worshipers, may be said to have *accorded*; not so, however, when the clerks of our Sub-Treasury answer the inquiries of their chief.

*Accord* is sometimes misused for *award* thus, "The Queen's prize was *accorded* to our townsman," etc.

**Accuse.** See BLAME IT ON.

**Acquaintance.** See FRIEND.

**Ad.** This abbreviation for the word *advertisement* is very justly considered a gross vulgarism. It is doubtful whether it is ever permissible.

**Adapt—Dramatize.** In speaking and in writing of stage matters these words are often misused. To *adapt* a play is to modify its construction with the view of improving its form for representation. Plays translated from one language into another are usually more or less *adapted*—i. e., altered to suit the taste of the public before which the translation is to be represented. To *dramatize* is to change the form of a story from the narrative to the dramatic—i. e., to make a drama out of a story. In the first instance the product of the playwright's labor is called an *adaptation*; in the second, a *dramatization*.

**Adjectives.** Adjectives are often properly used where the tyro in grammar would expect to find an adverb; as, "drink *deep*," "this looks *strange*," "he looks *bad*," "he stood *erect*."

Adjectives sometimes properly qualify other adjectives; as, "*wide* open," "*red* hot," "*pale* blue."

Such sentences as the following are common, yet they are all incorrect: "He was questioned *relative* [relatively] to the matter"; "I should have done it *independent* [independently] of that circumstance"; "*previous* [previously] to my arrival"; "*subsequent* [subsequently] to the election."

Such comparatives as *wiser*, *better*, *larger*, etc., and the contrasting adjectives *different*, *other*, etc., are often so placed as to render the construction awkward; as, "That is a much *better* statement of the case than yours," instead of "That statement of the case is much *better* than yours"; "Yours is a *larger* plot of ground than mine," instead of "Your plot of ground is *larger* than mine"; "This is a *different* course of proceeding from what I expected," instead of "This course of proceeding is *different* from what I expected"; "I could take no *other* method of doing it than the one I took," instead of "I could take no method of doing it *other* than the one I took."

**Administer.** "Carson died from blows *administered* by policeman Johnson."—New York Times. If policeman Johnson was as barbarous as is this use of the verb *to administer*, it is to be hoped that he was hanged. Governments, oaths, medicine, affairs—such as the affairs of the state—are *administered*, but not blows: *they are dealt*.

**Adopt.** This word is often used instead of *to decide upon*, and of *to take*; thus, "The measures *adopted* [by Parliament], as the result of this inquiry, will be productive of good." Better, "The measures *decided upon*," etc. Instead of "What course shall you *adopt* to get your pay?" say "What course shall you *take*?" etc. *Adopt* is properly used in a sentence like this: "The course (or measures) proposed by Mr. Blank was *adopted* by the committee";

that is, what was Blank's was *adopted* by the committee—a correct use of the word, as *to adopt* means to assume as one's own.

*Adopt* is sometimes so misused that its meaning is inverted. "Wanted to adopt," in the heading of advertisements, not infrequently is intended to mean that the advertiser wishes to be *relieved* of the care of a child, not that he wishes to *assume* the care of one.

**Advent.** Lovers of the strange and high-sounding sometimes use *advent* instead of the more familiar *arrive*. Here is an example: "He reflected that it would probably yet be several days before he could reasonably expect *the advent* of the wagon." How much better to say simply, "expect the wagon to arrive"!

*Advent* should be used of only what is important, stately, or sacred.

**Affect.** See EFFECT.

**Aggravate.** This word is often used when the speaker means to provoke, irritate, or anger. Thus, "It *aggravates* [provokes] me to be continually found fault with"; "He is easily *aggravated* [irritated]." To *aggravate* means to add weight to, to intensify, to make worse, to heighten. We therefore very properly speak of *aggravating* circumstances. To say of a person that he is *aggravated* is as incorrect as to say that he is *palliated*.

"Wicked people *aggravate* [i. e., make worse] their transgression by violence."

"Some speeches occasionally *aggravated* [provoked] him worse than he could bear."

"Her movements are either painfully slow or *aggravatingly* [provokingly] brusque."

**Aggregate.** Sometimes misused by lovers of big words in the sense of *amount to*, thus:

"The purses offered at the two meetings *aggregate* \$32,000."—N. Y. Times.

*Aggregate* means, to form into a collection or mass; hence we could say properly, The purses *aggregated*, amount to, \$32,000—i. e., the purses, when put together, amount to \$32,000. We could also properly say, The purses in the *aggregate*, amount to, \$32,000.

**Ago.** Sometimes misused for *previously*. *Ago* can not be used with a past tense.

"Nearly a week *ago* he had started from Denver, well mounted, and with a light wagon loaded with his baggage." Properly, "Nearly a week *previously*." See *SINCE*.

**Agree.** Sometimes misused in the sense of *admit*, thus: That a flat brick façade, pierced by a few windows, does not make an inspiring [?] picture, all will agree.

**Agriculturist.** This word is to be preferred to *agriculturalist*. See *CONVERSATIONALIST*.

**Ain't.** This can not be called a contraction, and however much it may be employed it will still be only a vulgarism. *I'm not* is the only possible contraction of *I am not*, and *we're not* of *we are not*.

**Alike.** This word is often most bunglingly coupled with *both*. Thus, "These bonnets are both alike," or, worse still, if possible, "both just alike." This reminds one of the story of Sam and Jem, who were very like each other, especially Sam.

**All.** See *UNIVERSAL*.

**All of.** This idiom, though popular, is not sanctioned by the best usage. The *of* is always a superfluity. "I have them *all*," not "I have all of them"; "Take it *all*," not "Take *all of* it."

**All over.** "The disease spread *all over* the country."

It is more logical and more emphatic to say, "The disease spread *over all* the country."

"Why, it is thought that the disease will spread *all over* [over all] Europe within thirty days and then cross the waters of the Atlantic."—N. Y. World.

**Allege.** Sometimes used for *say* by that class of speakers and writers that have little regard for the fitness of the words they employ—that class for whom bigness has more charms than signification.

A dispatch from Milwaukee, Wis., of July 27, 1884, to the New York Times, said:

"A storm yesterday in Eau Claire County damaged crops and buildings to the extent [amount] of \$20,000. Hailstones fell which [that] are *alleged* [said] to have been [better: that were, it is said] six and eight inches in diameter." Six and eight are fourteen—a hailstone fourteen inches in diameter! This Wisconsin Munchausen is indiscreetly extravagant. Hailstones from even six to eight inches in diameter would make too big a story for the credulity of most persons.

According to Crabb, the synonyms of *allege* are adduce, assign, and advance. "What is adduced tends to corroborate or to invalidate; what is *alleged* tends to criminate or to exculpate; what is *assigned* tends to justify or to support; what is *advanced* tends to explain and illustrate."

"The criminal *alleged* [i. e., pleaded] in his defense," etc.—Addison.

"If it be true, as Mr. Mangon *alleges* [says, or tells us], that the balloon was moved against the wind," etc.—N. Y. Sun.

**Allegory.** An elaborated metaphor is called an *allegory*; both are figurative representations, the words used signifying something beyond their literal meaning. Thus,

in the eightieth Psalm, the Jews are represented under the symbol of a vine :

"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt : thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they that pass by the way do pluck her ? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it."

An allegory is sometimes so extended that it makes a volume ; as in the case of Swift's Tale of a Tub, Arbuthnot's John Bull, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, etc. Fables and parables are short allegories.

**Allow.** This word is frequently misused in the West and South, where it is made to do service for *think* ; *to be of opinion* ; *to admit*. Thus :

"He *allows* [thinks] that he has the finest horse in the country."

"When the editor saw it he *allowed* [admitted] that it wasn't so very much of an error after all."

"Arthur soon *allowed* [admitted] to Tom that he was a thorough little gentleman, and would get over his shyness all in good time."

"I *allow* [admit] you've provocation for it."

**All the same.** This locution, used in the sense of *nevertheless*, is said to be a Scotticism. It has in the elegant French locution *tout de même* an exact counterpart.

**Allude.** The treatment this word has received is to be specially regretted, as its misuse has wellnigh robbed it of its true meaning, which is, to intimate delicately, to refer



to without mentioning directly. *Allude* is now very rarely used in any other sense than that of to speak of, to mention, to name, which is a long way from being its legitimate signification. This degradation is doubtless a direct outcome of untutored desire to be fine.

*Allude* is less direct than *refer*, and more direct than *hint* or *suggest*. One *alludes* to an event by introducing something allied to it; one *refers* to an event by introducing it directly into one's discourse.

**Almost—Nearly.** These two adverbs should not be used indiscriminately. The idea contained in *almost* is nearness to completion; the idea contained in *nearly* is nearness to supervention. *Almost* regards the ending of an act; *nearly*, to the beginning. A man that receives an injury so severe that he comes off with barely his life is *almost* killed; a man that escapes what would have killed him is *nearly* killed. Examples:

"I am *almost* dead with fatigue."

"The night was very dark, and I had *nearly* driven over him before I saw him."

"I have *almost* finished writing my letters."

"The two rivals *nearly* met each other; for the one had only just left me when the other arrived."

**Alone.** This word is often improperly used for *only*. That is *alone* that is unaccompanied; that is *only* of which there is no other. "Virtue *alone* makes us happy," means that virtue unaided suffices to make us happy; "Virtue *only* makes us happy," means that nothing else can do it—that that, and that only (not alone), can do it. "This means of communication is employed by man *alone*." Dr. Quackenbos should have written, "By man *only*."

*Alone* is always an adjective, and not, like *only*, some-

times an adverb. It means, apart from others ; single ; solitary.

"S. was editor of a periodical which [that] she intended should have contributions from her own sex *alone*" [only from her own sex].

"Such characters exist even in this plain tale, and it is these *alone* [only], and our kindly readers, we take leave of with regret."—Charles Reade.

"They know that every hope of national temperance reform rests upon the success of the party which has *alone* shown itself possessed of any concern for moral and social progress."—N. Y. Tribune. Should be "The *only* party that has shown," etc. See also ONLY.

**Alternative.** Often misused for *course*. An *alternative* is a choice between two courses, thus : "This hard *alternative*, or to renounce thy reason, or to believe."

"We were left the choice of three *alternatives*" [courses].

"We can not believe that these are the only *alternatives*" [courses].

"The only possible *alternative*" [course].

"The discovery left the court no *alternative* [course] but to pronounce judgment against them."

See EITHER ALTERNATIVE.

**Always.** Often used redundantly. thus, "Whenever I go to town I *always* visit my aunt."

**Ameliorate.** "The health of the Empress of Germany is greatly *ameliorated*." Why not say *improved*?

**Among.** Sometimes misused thus : "He was there *among* the rest" ; properly, *with* the rest.

**Among one another.** "They exchanged confidences *among one another*" ; properly, *with* one another, or *among themselves*.

**Amount of Perfection.** The observant reader of periodical literature often notes forms of expression that are perhaps best characterized by the word *bizarre*. Of these queer locutions, *amount of perfection* is a very good example. Mr. G. F. Watts, in the *Nineteenth Century*, says, "An *amount of perfection* has been reached which I was by no means prepared for." What Mr. Watts meant to say was, doubtless, that a *degree of excellence* had been reached. There are not a few that, in their prepossession for everything transatlantic, seem to be of opinion that the English language is commonly better written in England than it is in America. Those that think so are counseled to examine the diction of some of the most noted English critics and essayists, beginning, if they will, with Matthew Arnold.

**An.** This form of the indefinite article should not be used before any aspirated *h*. We say, properly, *a* heroic, *a* harangue, *a* historical, *a* habitual, and not *an* 'eroic, *an* 'arangue, *an* 'istorical, *an* 'abitual. We should leave this practice to those Americans that, after the fashion of the English, pronounce *year*, *yer*, *here*, *hyer*, and *been*, *bene*, though there is no authority for saying anything but *yere* and *here*, and little authority for saying anything but *bin*. As the American has no difficulty in aspirating his *h*'s, there is no excuse for his dropping the initial *h* in polysyllabic words, though the *h* does not stand under the accent. The truth is, however, that most Americans that use *an* before these *h*'s are not aware that, when they do so, the *h* should be dropped in the utterance, which to that extent is to Cockneyize the language.

**And.** Few vulgarisms are more common than the use of *and* for *to*. Examples: "Come *and* see me before you go"; "Try *and* do what you can for him"; "Go *and* see

your brother, if you can." In such sentences as these the proper particle to use is clearly *to*, and not *and*.

*And* is sometimes improperly used instead of *or*; thus, "It is obvious that a language like the Greek *and* Latin" (language?), etc., should be, "a language like the Greek *or* the Latin" (language), etc. There is no such thing as a Greek and Latin language.

*And* sometimes very improperly introduces a relative clause, no relative having occurred before, thus: "I have a book, printed at Antwerp, *and* which was once Adam Smith's." If the proper relative, *that*, had been used, it is probable that the writer would not have blundered.

**And which, or and that.** We frequently see the relative pronoun repeated to the great detriment of the sentence, thus: "Mr. Reno owns a mule which [that] is now forty-five years old, and *which* has not worn a collar for twenty-two years." The second relative only encumbers the sentence.

"The second assertion imputes the evil to a cause in itself inevitable, *and which* has only incidentally and partially operated to produce it." Read, "a cause *that* in itself is," and omit *which*.

Here is a sentence from the pen of the most extraordinary "whicher" I have ever met with:

"The American Consul for Syria came down here to make further inquiries into an incident *which* occurred a year ago at Acre, *and to which* I alluded in a letter at the time, *and which* gave rise to one of those interminable questions *which* occur so constantly between the Porte and foreign governments, *and which* invariably end in smoke."  
—Corr. N. Y. Sun.

Only two of these five *whiches* are necessary, and it would be better to change them to *thats*.

"He sailed round the island of Iturup, *which* is 713 miles long and 80 broad, and *which* is inhabited here and there along the coast."—N. Y. Sun.

The second *which* is clearly superfluous.

**Antecedents.** A convenient term for origin and history of a person. It expresses concisely what would otherwise require a rather ponderous circumlocution.

Yet the locution *past history*, or *history*, is much to be preferred. "What do you know of his *history*?" is far better English than "What do you know of his *antecedents*?" The one is the language of the drawing-room, the other of the bar-room.

**Anticipate.** Lovers of big words frequently make this verb do duty for *expect*, and sometimes for *foresee*. *Anticipate* is derived from two Latin words meaning *before* and *to take*, and, when properly used, means, to take beforehand; to go before so as to preclude another; to get the start of or to get ahead of; to enjoy, possess, or suffer, in expectation; to foretaste. It is therefore misused in such sentences as "Her death is hourly *anticipated*"; "By this means it is *anticipated* that the time from Europe will be lessened two days."

— Correctly used thus :

"If not *anticipated*, I shall hereafter make an attempt at a magazine paper on The Philosophy of Point."—Poe.

"The chief portion of Prof. Espy's theory has been *anticipated*."—Poe.

"I am far from pretending to instruct the profession or *anticipating* their directions to such as are under their government."—Arbuthnot.

"Why should we

*Anticipate* our sorrows? 'Tis like those

Who die for fear of death."—Shakespeare.

"We *anticipate* what a person is going to say by saying it before him."—Crabb.

"But, after all, it may simply *anticipate* on the English of the future."—Dr. Fitzedward Hall.

"The memorial sketch is a model of propriety. The author has carefully refrained from *anticipating* the biography that, we trust, will shortly see the light."—N. Y. Sun.

"In several respects the Mosaic Law is declared to have *anticipated* modern science by several thousand years."—Hosmer.

"It is well to have it understood that our municipal authorities and local sanitary health boards had *anticipated* by practical work the proclamation issued by the President."—N. Y. Star.

Misused in the sense of *expect*, thus :

"The poetry of Mr. Fawcett, as one might *anticipate* from an acquaintance with his prose," etc.—N. Y. Tribune.

"Trouble is *anticipated* over the proposed employment of Hungarians in the Hocking Valley mines."—N. Y. Herald.

"Were Greeley's movements those which [that] it was *anticipated* he would make ?"—N. Y. Times.

"Miss Hurst's performances at Wallack's Theater have brought on the crisis which [that] we *anticipated*."—Evening Telegram.

"The attempt to browbeat the peers into abjuring a privilege which [that] so sound a Liberal as Mr. Bagehot pronounced expedient and wholesome is not having the success which [that] was at first *anticipated*."—N. Y. Sun.

"She is now engaged on a series of experiments in evolution from which I *anticipate* the most striking and original results."—Hammond.

"Do you think that Germany keeps up its tremendous army in *anticipation* [expectation] of a speedy war?"

"Young Lincoln would have been almost as likely to *anticipate* [foresee] the marvelous growth of the State, as to foresee his own still more wonderful elevation."

Another point: In all cases like this it is far better to *repeat the word* than to use a synonym. The repetition always tends to strengthen and to balance the sentence.

**Antiquary—Antiquarian.** Both these words are used as nouns by writers of repute; but *antiquarian*, Todd, Hodgson, and some other grammarians insist, should be used only as an adjective.

**Antithesis.** A phrase that opposes contraries is called an *antithesis*.

"I see a chief who leads my chosen sons,  
All armed with points, *antitheses*, and puns."

The following are examples:

"Though gentle, yet not dull;  
Strong, without rage; without o'erflowing, full."  
"Contrasted faults through all their manners reign;  
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;  
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;  
And e'en in penance planning sins anew."

The following is an excellent example of *personification* and *antithesis* combined:

"Talent convinces; genius but excites;  
That tasks the reason; this the soul delights.  
Talent from sober judgment takes its birth,  
And reconciles the pinion to the earth;  
Genius unsettles with desires the mind,  
Contented not till earth be left behind."

In the following extract from Johnson's *Life of Pope*, individual peculiarities are contrasted by means of *antitheses*:

“Of genius—that power which constitutes a poet ; that quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert ; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates—the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigor Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more ; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope ; and even of Dryden it must be said that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden’s performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion or extorted by domestic necessity ; he composed without consideration and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call or gather in one excursion was all that he sought and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden, therefore, are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden’s fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope’s the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight. Dryden’s page is a natural field, rising into inequalities and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation ; Pope’s is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe and leveled by the roller.”

There are forms of antithesis in which the contrast is only of a secondary kind.

**Anxiety of Mind.** See EQUANIMITY OF MIND.

**Anxious.** This word is very often used when *desirous* would better express the meaning intended.

*Anxious* means full of anxiety ; suffering from suspense



or uncertainty ; concerned about the future ; solicitous ; unquiet ; uneasy—which is wide of the meaning intended in the following sentences :

“ Not *anxious* to get to Canada.”

“ Mr. S. is not willing to accept [assume] the responsibility of backing the first production, which is the reason that Mr. O. is *anxious* to bring out the play in California.”

“ A writer in Macmillan's Magazine, *anxious* to preserve the well of English undefiled, calls attention,” etc.

“ Mr. Farnan assumes to be *anxious* to meet Mr. Sullivan.”

“ But I am still more *anxious* that you should not misjudge my father.”

“ He is very intelligent, very liberal in his views, very *anxious* to do something for humanity.”

“ I recollect that you were *anxious* to hang him to the nearest tree.”

“ Your father is *anxious* to have you live in New York.”

“ Tyscovus was *anxious* to be married at once.”

In all these sentences the meaning intended was far from being that of the word *anxious* ; it was that of the word *desirous*.

Here are some examples of the proper use of *anxious* :

“ The office of the Monarch Line of steamships had many callers yesterday. They had friends or relatives on board the Lydian Monarch, and were *anxious* in regard to their fate.”

“ Then he was trying his 'prentice hand, and was more *anxious* about the treatment than about the matter.”—Julian Hawthorne.

“ Naturally she was *anxious* about the appearance he made in what is called 'society.' ”—Badeau.

**Any.** This word is sometimes made to do service for *at all*. We say properly, "She is not *any* better"; but we can not properly say, "She does not see *any*," meaning that she is blind.

**Anybody else.** "Public-school teachers are informed that *anybody else's* is correct."—N. Y. Times. An English writer says: "In such phrases as *anybody else*, and the like, *else* is often put in the possessive case, as, 'anybody else's servant'; and some grammarians defend this use of the possessive case, arguing that *somebody else* is a compound noun." It is better grammar and more euphonious to consider *else* as being an adjective, and to form the possessive by adding the apostrophe and *s* to the word that *else* qualifies; thus, anybody's else, nobody's else, somebody's else.

"The expressions *some one else*, *any one else*, *every one else*, *somebody else*, etc., are in good usage treated as substantive phrases and have the possessive inflection upon the *else*: as, '*somebody else's* umbrella'; but some prefer to treat them simply as elliptical expressions; as 'the umbrella is *somebody's else*' (i. e., other than the person previously mentioned)."—Standard Dictionary.

**Anyhow.** "An exceedingly vulgar phrase," says Professor Mathews, in his *Words: Their Use and Abuse*. "Its use *in any manner*, by one who professes to write and speak the English tongue with purity, is unpardonable." Professor Mathews seems to have a special dislike for this colloquialism. It is recognized by the lexicographers, and I think is generally accounted, even by the careful, permissible in conversation, though incompatible with dignified diction, in which such phrases as "in any event," "be that as it may," "at any rate," and the like, are to be preferred.

**Aphorism.** A principle or precept, either in science or in morals, that is presented to the understanding in a few words, is called an *aphorism*.

“Strain the phraseology and you weaken the effect.”

“When the words outnumber the thoughts, some of them are only in the way.”

“He that writes thoroughly well never uses more words or bigger words than are really necessary.”

“Intemperance in the use of language is as much to be censured as intemperance in anything else; like intemperance in other things, its effect is vulgarizing.”

**Apostrophe.** Turning from the person or persons to whom a discourse is addressed and appealing to some person or thing absent, constitutes what, in rhetoric, is called the *apostrophe*. The following are some examples :

“O gentle sleep,

Nature’s soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness ? ”

“Sail on, thou lone imperial bird  
Of quenchless eye and tireless wing ! ”

“ Help, angels, make assay !

Bow, stubborn knees ! and heart with strings of steel,  
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe :

All may yet be well ! ”

**Appear.** See SEEM.

**Appreciate.** If any word in the language has cause to complain of ill-treatment, this one has. *Appreciate* means, to estimate *justly*—to set the *true* value on men or things, their worth, beauty, or advantages of any sort whatsoever. Thus, an overestimate is no more *appreciation* than is an underestimate. A man is *appreciated* when his good and his bad qualities are justly considered

in our estimate of him. "I *appreciate* him highly"—an expression we often hear—is nonsense. "I have great regard for him," or, "I think a great deal of him," or, "I hold him in high esteem," is what we should say.

We *value*, or *prize*, things highly, not *appreciate* them highly. This word is also very improperly made to do service for *rise* or *increase* in value; thus, "Land *appreciates* rapidly in the West."

Dr. L. T. Townsend misuses *appreciate* in his *Art of Speech*, vol. i, p. 142, thus: "The laws of harmony . . . may allow copiousness . . . in parts of a discourse . . . in order that the condensation of other parts may be the *more highly appreciated*." If the doctor had written *more thoroughly appreciated* he would have "passed muster."

Here is a very extraordinary use of the word by Mr. Chauncey Depew: "He *appreciated* that his countrymen had a claim on his memory."

**Apprehend—Comprehend.** The English often use the first of these two words where we use the second. Both express an effort of the thinking faculty; but to *apprehend* is simply to take an idea into the mind—it is the mind's first effort—while to *comprehend* is *fully to understand*. We are dull or quick of *apprehension*. Children *apprehend* much that they do not *comprehend*. Trench says, "We *apprehend* many truths which [that] we do not *comprehend*." "*Apprehend*," says Crabb, "expresses the weakest kind of belief, the having [of] the least idea of the presence of a thing."

"There is a distinction between the faculties of comprehension and apprehension. If I take the distance of a fixed star, it is beyond my mind to grasp the enormous distance. If I calculate that distance, at every step I know I am right. So we are able to support and sustain a truth,

and yet we can not entirely grasp and master it. It is in this manner that we *apprehend* the infinite."—Monsignor Capel.

**Approach.** Sometimes very improperly used in the sense of *address*, *petition*, *memorialize*, *appeal to*; thus, "The teachers have *approached* the Educational Department in some matters that concern their interest."

*Approach* is frequently used in a sense that implies bribery, when the *approaching* is supposed to be done covertly, by insinuation or cautious intimation.

**Apt.** Often misused for *likely*, and sometimes for *liable*. "What is he *apt* to be doing?" "Where shall I be *apt* to find him?" "If properly directed, it will be *apt* to reach me." In such sentences as these *likely* is the proper word to use. "If you go there you will be *apt* to get into trouble." Here either *likely* or *liable* is the proper word, according to the thought the speaker would convey.

**Arctics.** See RUBBERS.

**Aren't.** A contraction of *are not*, frequently heard, yet never to be preferred to *are you not* or *are they not*. Unlike "we're," "you're," "I'm," "I'll," "they'll," "he'll," etc., which are all contractions of the verb only, *aren't* can hardly be considered good colloquial usage.

**Artist.** Of late years this word has been appropriated by the members of so many crafts that it has wellnigh been despoiled of its meaning. Your cook, your barber, your tailor, your bootmaker, and so on to satiety, are all *artists*. Painters, sculptors, architects, actors, and singers, nowadays, generally prefer being thus called, rather than to be spoken of as *artists*.

**As.** In an affirmative proposition, *as* corresponds to *as*: "This is *as* good *as* that."

In a negative proposition, *so* corresponds to *as*: "This is not *so* good *as* that." Many writers are not careful to make this distinction.

*As* is sometimes very improperly used instead of *that*: "Not *as* [that] I know." "I don't know *as* [that] they have either as a matter of law or of necessity."

*As*, preceded by *such* or by *same*, has the force of a relative applying to persons or to things. "He offered me the *same* conditions *as* he offered you." "The same conditions *that*" would be equally proper. See also LIKE.

**Ascribe.** See IMPUTE.

**Aside.** Sometimes misused for *apart*.

"Words have a potency of association *aside* from their significance as representative signs."—Dr. William Mathews.

"*Aside*," says Prof. J. S. Blackwell, "in the sense of *separately*, as a *subject of thought*, is an Americanism, and is unknown and altogether unexemplified in correct and classical English. The proper word is *apart*."

**Asperse.** This word and its synonyms are employed by few persons in their true sense. Each word denotes an effort made in a particular way to injure. To *asperse*, is to speak slightly of any one, and to insinuate that he is less worthy than he is generally believed to be. To *detract*, is to ascribe acts to unworthy motives, or otherwise to seek to lessen seeming merit. There must always be some supposed good in the object detracted—charity or liberality, for example. To *defame*, is openly to advance some serious charge against a person; to censure maliciously and falsely in public. To *slander*, is to circulate an evil report, being heedless of its truth. To *calumniate*, is to fabricate and circulate anything to the injury of another. Ill report

originates with the calumniator ; the slanderer is he that disseminates it.

**As though for as if.** "A most frequent and notable error is that of using 'as though' for 'as if' in complex sentences of a certain kind. An attempt to analyze such a sentence brings to light the elliptical clause that the construction always involves, and shows at once the defect. For example :

" 'The house looks as though it had never been painted.' 'The man moves as though he were tired.' 'He spoke as though he was offended.'

"In all these we quickly discover, on supplying the ellipsis between *as* and *though*, that this disjunctive conjunction either makes nonsense of the several statements or gives a different meaning from that intended.

" 'The house looks as it would look though it had never been painted.' 'The man moves as he would move though he were tired.' 'He spoke as he would speak though he was offended.'

"Substitute *if* for *though*, and the meaning in every case is at once clear. *As if* is always to be preferred to *as though*. The very nature of such statements declares their need of a *copulative* in the connecting word ; the disjunctive is always an enemy to their meaning."—Anne Balderston.

**At.** "They do things differently *in* [not at] the South." He is not *at* [not to] home.

**At all.** "It is not strange, for my uncle is King of Denmark." Had Shakespeare written, "It is not *at all* strange," it is clear that his diction would have been much less forcible. "I do not wish for any *at all*"; "I saw no one *at all*"; "If he had any desire *at all* to see me, he would come where I am."

The *at all* in sentences like these is superfluous. Yet

there are instances in which the phrase is certainly a very convenient one, and seems to be unobjectionable. It is much used, and by good writers.

**At auction.** This expression is an Americanism; in England it is unknown. Johnson says the verb *auction* means, "to sell *by* auction"—i. e., *by* offering to the highest bidder.

Several prominent auctioneers in New York habitually announce the sale of pictures, statuary, and books "*by* auction."

*At private sale* is also peculiar to American English.

The good-will and furniture of the house were disposed of *by* [not at] private sale.—N. Y. Times.

The elephant Emperor has been sold *by* auction in England for \$500.—N. Y. Sun.

But we may buy *at an* auction and *at a* private sale, and things may be sold *at an* auction and *at a* private sale.

**At best.** Instead of *at best* and *at worst*, we should say *at the best* and *at the worst*. If we consider the adjectives as being used substantively, we see at a glance that the article is necessary; or, if we consider them as being used adjectively and supply the ellipsis—the noun we suppose them to qualify—we still see that the article is necessary. We always say, "I did *the* best I could," "You saw him at *his* best," "Let them do *their* worst," "I will do *my* best," etc.

**At last.** See AT LENGTH.

**At least.** This adverbial phrase is often misplaced. "The Romans understood liberty *at least* as well as we.' This must be interpreted to mean, 'The Romans understood liberty *as well as we* understand liberty.' The intended meaning is, 'that whatever things the Romans failed



to understand, they understood *liberty*.' To express this meaning we might put it thus: 'The Romans understood *at least* liberty as well as we *do*'; 'liberty, *at least*, the Romans understood as well as we *do*.' 'A tear, *at least*, is due to the unhappy'; '*at least* a tear is due to the unhappy'; 'a tear is due *at least* to the unhappy'; 'a tear is due to the unhappy *at least*'—all express different meanings. 'This can not, *often at least*, be done'; 'this can not be done *often, at least*.' (1. 'It often happens that this can not be done.' 2. 'It does not often happen that this can be done.') So, 'man is *always* capable of laughing'; 'man is capable of laughing *always*.'"—Bain.

**Audience.** Often improperly used. An auditor is a person that listens; a spectator is one that looks. An auditorium is a place where people assemble to hear, to listen to something; a spectatorium is a place where people assemble to see, to look at something. Those that assemble in an auditorium are auditors, and constitute collectively an audience; those that assemble in a spectatorium are spectators. An audience, then, is an assemblage of hearers, not of spectators; yet we hear of the *audience* having been large at a prize fight, at a game of ball, at a boat race, and so on.

**Authoress.** With regard to the use of this and certain other words of like formation, Mr. Gould, in his "Good English," says: "*Poet* means simply a person who writes poetry, and *author*, in the sense under consideration, a person who writes poetry or prose—not a *man* who writes, but a *person* who writes. Nothing in either word indicates sex; and everybody knows that the functions of both poets and authors are common to both sexes. Hence, *authoress* and *poetess* are superfluous. And they are superfluous, also, in another respect—that they are very rarely used, indeed

they hardly *can* be used, independently of the *name* of the writer, as Mrs., or Miss, or a female Christian name. They are, besides, philological absurdities, because they are fabricated on the false assumption that their primaries indicate *men*. They are, moreover, liable to the charge of affectation and prettiness, to say nothing of pedantic pretension to accuracy.

"If the *ess* is to be permitted, there is no reason for excluding it from *any* noun that indicates a person; and the next editions of our dictionaries may be made complete by the addition of *writress*, *officeress*, *manageress*, *superintendentess*, *secretaryess*, *treasureress*, *walkeress*, *talkeress*, and so on to the end of the vocabulary."

On the other hand, there are those that think the use of *authoress* should be left to individual tastes. It can not be denied, however, that we could get on quite as well without it.

**Avenge—Revenge.** We *avenge* wrong done to others, and *revenge* wrong done to ourselves.

"With tears in her eyes she related the insult she had received, and entreated me to *avenge* her."

"Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,  
*Revenge* yourselves alone on Cassius."

"The just *avenger* of his injured ancestors."

**Avocation.** Often misused for *vocation*. Our *avocations* are the things we do for the love of doing them; our *vocations* are the things we do for gain.

"Every man should have two things: a *vocation* and an *avocation*. The number of Americans who [that] find their *avocation* in book-collecting has greatly increased within the last few years."

"Let your authorship be a pastime, not a trade; let it be your *avocation*, not your *vocation*."

"The tracing of resemblances among the objects and events of the world is a constant *avocation* of the human mind." See VOCATION.

**Avoid.** We often see this word, which means to shun, to keep away from, misused in the sense of *prevent* or *hinder*, thus :

"There shall be no cause of complaint if I can *avoid* it."

**Awful.** Persons with only a limited vocabulary at their command frequently use this word when some other word of a less repulsive mien would be chosen by persons of better taste and more culture.

**A while since.** An expression often heard but not correct. We should say, "A while *ago*." See SINCE.

**Bad cold.** Inasmuch as colds are never *good*, why say a *bad* cold? We may talk about *slight* colds and *severe* colds, but not about *bad* colds.

**Badly.** Sometimes inelegantly used for *very much* ; thus, "I shall miss you *badly*," "I have wanted to see you *badly*."

**Baggage.** See LUGGAGE.

**Balance.** This word is frequently and very erroneously used in the sense of *rest*, *remainder*. It properly means *the excess of one thing over another*, and in this sense, and in no other, should it be used. Hence it is improper to talk about the *balance* of the edition, of the evening, of the money, of the toasts, of the men, etc. In such cases the proper word to use is *rest* or *remainder*. Balance is properly used in speaking of accounts—the difference between the debits and the credits.

"It sold to them by the square foot land which [that] it had bought at acre prices, generally [usually] taking one third in cash and part of the miner's pay every month until

the *balance* [remainder] was wiped out [paid].”—N. Y. Sun.

**Banister.** By common consent, a corruption of the word *balustrade*, the name in architecture of a railing formed of a range of balusters supporting a hand rail or coping.

**Barbarism.** Defined as an offense against good usage, by the use of an improper word—i. e., a word that is antiquated or improperly formed. *Preventative, enthuse, agriculturalist, donate*, etc., are barbarisms. See also SOLECISM.

**Barn.** A good old verb that seems to have fallen into comparative disuse.

“On Thursday afternoon last, under a flattering sun, he started for the sixth time *to barn* the hay.”—Corr. N. Y. Sun.

**Beastly.** A colloquialism much used by the English; as, “What *beastly* weather!” “I’m *beastly* tired,” “She’s *beastly* ugly,” etc. This use of the word, coarse as it is, is often affected by persons of culture. It is never defensible save in the phrase “*beastly* drunk.”

**Beau.** A word used by the uneducated instead of *to escort*.—De Vere.

**Been to.** We not infrequently hear a superfluous *to* tacked to a sentence; thus, “Where have you *been to*?”

**Before.** Sometimes absurdly used in the sense of *rather than*.

“Death *before* madness.”—N. Y. Times.

This is like the man that died and made a will.

**Beg.** We often see letters begin with the words, “I *beg* to acknowledge the receipt of your favor,” etc. We should write, “I *beg leave* to acknowledge,” etc. No one would say, “I *beg* to tell you,” instead of, “I *beg leave* to tell you.”

**Begin—Commence.** These words have the same meaning; careful speakers, however, ordinarily prefer to use the former. Indeed, there is rarely any good reason for giving the preference to the latter. See also COMMENCE.

**Being.** See IS BEING.

**Being built.** See IS BEING.

**Belong.** We frequently hear such expressions as, "We all *belong*," "Do you *belong*," and the like, meaning, belong to an association of some sort. The only authority for this locution is vulgar usage.

**Belongings.** An old idiomatic expression now coming into use again.

**Beside—Besides.** In the later unabridged editions of Webster's Dictionary we find the following remarks concerning the use of these two words: "*Beside* and *besides*, whether used as prepositions or [as] adverbs, have been considered synonymous from an early period of our literature, and have been freely interchanged by our best writers. There is, however, a tendency in present usage to make the following distinction between them: 1. That *beside* be used only and always as a preposition, with the original meaning *by the side of*; as, to sit *beside* a fountain; or with the closely allied meaning *aside from*, or *out of*; as, this is *beside* our present purpose: 'Paul, thou art *beside* thyself.' The adverbial sense to be wholly transferred to the cognate word. 2. That *besides*, as a preposition, take the remaining sense, *in addition to*; as, *besides* all this; *besides* the consideration here offered: 'There was a famine in the land *besides* the first famine.' And that it also take the adverbial sense of *moreover*, *beyond*, etc., which had been divided between the words; as, *besides*, there are other considerations which [that] belong to this case,"

**Best.** See AT BEST.

**Be that as it will.** Properly, Be that as it *may*.

**Between.** This word is often misused for *among*; thus, "The word *fellow*, however much in use it may be *between* men, sounds very objectionable from the lips of women."—London Queen. Should be, "*among* men." *Between* is used in reference to two things, parties, or persons; *among*, in reference to a greater number. "Castor and Pollux with one soul *between* them." "You have *among* you many a purchased slave."

When used to express contrast, the word may be correctly used in speaking of more than two; as, "True, the three boys are brothers, but there is a great difference *between* them."

**Better.** Often incorrectly used instead of *more than*; as, "It is *better* than a year since I saw him."

**Black—Blacken.** Each of these two verbs means, to make black, yet they should not be used indiscriminately. Shoes and eyes are *blackened*, and reputations are *blackened*.

"He saw a calm, composed, dignified man, . . . his boots well *blackened* [blackened], his hands properly gloved," etc.

Nothing is more despicable than a desire *to blacken* the reputation of others.

**Blame it on.** Here is a gross vulgarism that we sometimes hear from persons of considerable culture. They use it in the sense of *accuse* or *suspect*; thus, "He *blames it on* his brother," meaning that he *accuses* or *suspects* his brother of having done it, or of being at fault for it.

**Bogus.** A colloquial term incompatible with dignified diction.

**Both.** We sometimes hear such absurd sentences as, "They *both* resemble each other very much"; "They are *both* alike"; "They *both* met in the street." *Both* is like-

wise redundant in the following sentence : " It performs at the same time the offices of *both* the nominative and the objective case." Also redundant in such a sentence as, " He lost all his live stock—*both* horses, cows, and sheep."

*Both* is sometimes so used in negative sentences that the meaning is doubtful. "*Both* candidates were not appointed." Were both rejected? or was one rejected and the other appointed? A little care ordinarily enables one to avoid ambiguity.

**Bound.** The use of this word in the sense of *doomed*, *determined*, *resolved*, *certain*, or *will be compelled* is a barbarism. Not, " He is *bound* to do it," but, " He is *determined*, *resolved*, or *certain* to do it." Not, " He is *bound* to fail," but, " He is *doomed*, or *destined*, or *sure* to fail."

" The Russian nobleman is fast degenerating; he is *bound* [destined, or will be compelled] to yield his place to new blood."—Corr. N. Y. Sun.

" If the Queen should insist upon [on] the appointment of her son [her son's being appointed], there is *bound* [certain] to be a ministerial crisis."—N. Y. Sun.

Here is a sentence in which the meaning of *bound* is not clear : " The Government is *bound*, in such a personal matter, to respect the Queen's wishes."—N. Y. Sun. Does the writer mean *bound in honor*, or *will be compelled*?

**Bran-new.** A corruption of *brand-new*.

**Bravery—Courage.** The careless often use these two words as though they were interchangeable. *Bravery* is inborn, is instinctive; *courage* is the product of reason, calculation. There is much merit in being courageous, little merit in being brave. Men that are simply *brave* are careless, while the courageous man is always cautious. *Bravery* often degenerates into temerity. *Moral courage* is that firmness of principle that enables a man to do what he

deems to be his duty although his action may subject him to adverse criticism. True *moral courage* is one of the rarest and most admirable of virtues.

Alfred the Great, in resisting the attacks of the Danes, displayed *bravery*; in entering their camp as a spy, he displayed *courage*.

**Bring—Fetch—Carry.** The indiscriminate use of these three words is very common. To *bring* is to convey to or toward—a simple act; to *fetch* means to *go* and bring—a compound act; to *carry* often implies motion from the speaker, and is followed by *away* or *off*, and thus is opposed to *bring* and *fetch*. Yet one hears such expressions as, “Go to Mrs. D.’s and *bring* her this bundle; and here—you may *fetch* her this book also.” We use the words correctly thus: “*Fetch*, or *go bring*, me an apple from the cellar”; “When you come home, *bring* some lemons”; “*Carry* this book home with you.”

**British against American English.** “The most important peculiarity of American English is a laxity, irregularity, and confusion in the use of particles. The same thing is, indeed, observable in England, but not to the same extent, though some gross departures from idiomatic propriety, such as *differcent to* for *different from*, are common in England, which none but very ignorant persons would be guilty of in America. . . . In the tenses of the verbs, I am inclined to think that well-educated Americans conform more closely to grammatical propriety than the corresponding class in England. . . . In general, I think we may say that, in point of naked syntactical accuracy, the English of America is not at all inferior to that of England; but we do not discriminate so precisely in the meaning of words, nor do we habitually, in either conversation or in writing, express ourselves so gracefully or employ so



classic a diction, as the English. Our taste in language is less fastidious, and our licenses and inaccuracies are more frequently of a character indicative of want of refinement and elegant culture than those we hear in educated society in England.”—George P. Marsh.

“We have no dialects in this country, either of locality or of caste. In regard to enunciation, the average American will make himself heard and understood, wherever there is difficulty in hearing, far better than the average Briton—not by virtue of vociferation, but on account of his clearer and more accurate speech, especially in following more closely the spelling. This is illustrated by such words as *trait*, *silver*, and *schedule*, which are pronounced in this country according to regular analogy, but have in Great Britain special and exceptional pronunciations. It is illustrated still more clearly by dozens of geographical names.

“American spelling differs from British in one respect only—its greater simplicity. Illustrations: *Waggon*, *parlour*, *storey* (of a house), *pease* (plural of *pea*), *plough*, *draught*, *shew*, *cyder*, *gaol*, and many other words that have been simplified in this country.

“American speech changes less than British. (a) We have preserved hundreds of words that have gone out of use in Great Britain, and we avoid the use of many novelities invented in that country, such as *totalling* or *totting*, *hipped*, *navvy*, *fad*, *randomly*, *outing*, and *tund*. (b) We avoid many recent changes in meaning that are accepted by the English, such as using *traffic* for *travel* or *passage*, *famous* for *excellent*, *bargain* for *haggle*, *rot* for *nonsense*, *jug* for *pitcher*, *good form* for *in good taste*, *trap* for *carriage*, *tub* for *bathe*, *starved* for *frozen*, *stop* for *stay*, *assist* for *be present*, *intimate* for *announce*, etc. (c) We refuse to follow the British in their arbitrary restriction of the mean-

ing of certain words. Thus, *a young person* is always a girl in England. The Briton *rides* in an omnibus, but always *drives* in a carriage; and though he will say that he is confined to a sick-room or stretched upon a sick-bed, he is horrified at the idea of being called *sick*, unless suffering from nausea. (*d*) We do not turn active and reflective verbs into intransitives. (*e*) We do not abbreviate words so much. (*f*) We are not so apt to get in superfluous words—‘What *ever* are you doing!’ ‘The infant mortality is *something* enormous.’ ‘I don’t say but *what* this work has *got* to be done.’

“American writers of the first class seem to be, on the whole, rather more careful about grammar than are British. Of course, however, nobody denies that the language has suffered some bad treatment here as well as abroad.”—Gilbert M. Tucker.

**British against American Orthoëpy.** “The causes of the differences in pronunciation [between the English and the Americans] are partly physical, and therefore difficult, if not impossible, to resist, and partly owing to a difference of circumstances. Of this latter class of influences, the universality of reading in America is the most obvious and important. The most marked difference is, perhaps, in the length or prosodical quantity of the vowels; and both of the causes I have mentioned concur to produce this effect. We are said to drawl our words by protracting the vowels and giving them a more diphthongal sound than the English. Now, an Englishman who reads will habitually utter his vowels more fully and distinctly than his countryman who does not; and, upon the same principle, a nation of readers, like the Americans, will pronounce more deliberately and clearly than a people so large a proportion of whom are unable to read, as in England. From

our universal habit of reading there results not only a greater distinctness of articulation, but a strong tendency to assimilate the spoken to the written language. Thus, Americans incline to give to every syllable of a written word a distinct enunciation ; and the popular habit is to say *dic-tion-ar-y*, *mil-it-ar-y*, with a secondary accent on the penultimate, instead of sinking the third syllable, as is so common in England. There is, no doubt, something disagreeably stiff in an anxious and affected conformity to the very letter of orthography ; and to those accustomed to a more hurried utterance we may seem to drawl, when we are only giving a full expression to letters which, though etymologically important, the English habitually slur over, sputtering out, as a Swedish satirist says, one half of the word and swallowing the other. The tendency to make the long vowels diphthongal is noticed by foreigners as a peculiarity of the orthoëpy of our language ; and this tendency will, of course, be strengthened by any cause which produces greater slowness and fullness of articulation. Besides the influence of the habit of reading, there is some reason to think that climate is affecting our articulation. In spite of the coldness of our winters, our flora shows that the climate of even our Northern States belongs, upon the whole, to a more southern type than that of England. In southern latitudes, at least within the temperate zone, articulation is generally much more distinct than in the northern regions. Witness the pronunciation of Spanish, Italian, Turkish, as compared with English, Danish, and German. Participating, then, in the physical influences of a southern climate, we have contracted something of the more distinct articulation that belongs to a dry atmosphere and a clear sky. And this view of the case is confirmed by the fact that the inhabitants of the Southern

States incline, like the people of southern Europe, to throw the accent toward the end of the word, and thus, like all nations that use that accentuation, bring out all the syllables. This we observe very commonly in the comparative Northern and Southern pronunciation of proper names. I might exemplify by citing familiar instances ; but, lest that should seem invidious, it may suffice to say that, not to mention more important changes, many a Northern member of Congress goes to Washington a *dactyl* or a *trochee*, and comes home an *amphibrach* or an *iambus*. Why or how external physical causes, as climate and modes of life, should affect pronunciation, we can not say ; but it is evident that material influences of some sort are producing a change in our bodily constitution, and we are fast acquiring a distinct national Anglo-American type. That the delicate organs of articulation should participate in such tendencies is altogether natural ; and the operation of the causes which give rise to them is palpable even in our handwriting, which, if not uniform with itself, is generally, nevertheless, so unlike common English script as to be readily distinguished from it.

“To the joint operation, then, of these two causes—universal reading and climatic influences—we must ascribe our habit of dwelling upon vowel and diphthongal sounds, or of drawing, if that term is insisted upon. . . . But it is often noticed by foreigners as both making us more readily understood by them when speaking our own tongue, and as connected with a flexibility of organ, which enables us to acquire a better pronunciation of other languages than is usual with Englishmen. In any case, as, in spite of the old adage, speech is given us that we may make ourselves understood, our drawing, however prolonged, is preferable to the nauseous, foggy, mumbling thickness of articulation

which characterizes the cockney, and is not unfrequently affected by Englishmen of a better class."—George P. Marsh.

**Bryant's Prohibited Words.** See INDEX EXPURGATORIUS.

**But.** This word is misused in various ways. "I do not doubt *but* he will be here": read, doubt *that*. "I should not wonder *but*": read, *if*. "I have no doubt *but* that he will go": suppress *but*. "I do not doubt *but* that it is true": suppress *but*. "There can be no doubt *but* that the burglary is the work of professional cracksmen."—N. Y. Herald. Doubt *that*, and not *but that*. "A careful canvass leaves no doubt *but* that the nomination," etc.: suppress *but*. "There is no reasonable doubt *but* that it is all it professes to be": suppress *but*. "The mind no sooner entertains any proposition *but* it presently hastens," etc.: read, *than*. "No other resource *but* this was allowed him": read, *than*.

There are sentences in which *but* is used correctly with *that*: as, "I have no fear *but that* he will come"; meaning, I am sure he will come. "I have no fear *that* he will come," it will be seen, means the contrary of what the sentence means with the *but*. "I have no fear *that* he will not come" is, however, a form to be preferred. See WHAT.

**Bulk.** Though sanctioned by the dictionaries, the use of this word in the sense of the *main mass*, the *majority*, the *greater part*, is not considered by careful writers as being good diction.

"There was a severe frost in Manitoba, *but* although the *bulk* [greater part] of the wheat is still uncut, it was not damaged."

**Bully.** "The term is such good old English that there

would be no objection to its revival, but for its modern allegiance to slang."—De Vere.

In the interest of justice, we can't do without it.

**By.** This word is more frequently misused than any other word in the language. It is often misused for *with*, and sometimes for *from* and *for*.

Before the agent or doer we properly use *by*; before the instrument or means, *with*; as, "No wonder Beethoven was unhappy, afflicted as he was *by* [with] such librettists." "The place was filled *by* [with] ladies and gentlemen." "The Phi Beta Kappa ode to 'The Republic' is distinguished *by* [for] dignity of tone and . . . *by* [for] . . . elevation of style."—N. Y. Tribune.

"Of all bad things *by* [with] which mankind are cursed, Their own bad tempers surely are the worst."

Cumberland.

"We are sorry to see that R. talks of replacing his handbook *by* [with] a manual." "Sitting Bull's head was adorned *by* [with] a number of feathers." "At length [last] the queen chose a king and the ball ended *by* [with] a waltz."—N. Y. Sun.

"There may have been some wriggling, but too minute to be detected *by* [with] the naked eye." "When undisturbed, they seek a bit of wood, and catching it *by* [with] their horny legs," etc.

"A gentleman by the name of Hinkley."—N. Y. Times.

O no! You mean, "A gentleman *of* the name of Hinkley." This is English, you know.—N. Y. Sun.

One may say, "I know no one *of* the name of Brown," or "I know no one *by* the name of Brown," but the meaning is very different. One might know a man *of* the name of Brown, but know him *by* the name of Smith; that is,

the man's name might be really Brown though supposed to be Smith.

We say, then, "I know a man *of* the name of Brown," when we mean that we know a man whose name is Brown.

"Fought fire *by* [with] wine."—Headline, N. Y. Sun, June 28, 1895.

**Calamity.** This word is sometimes misused by careless writers in the sense of *loss*, whereas properly it should be used in an abstract sense, meaning *source of misery*, or *of loss*. To call a loss a calamity is as absurd as it would be to call a loss an inundation, a famine, or a plague. Calamities are *causes*, losses are *results*.

The following is a typical sentence from the pen of one of whom it has been good-naturedly said, "Poor man, he meant what he said, but he didn't know what he meant."

"The weaker spirit of his wife dared scarcely offer [scarcely dared to offer] her tributary [?] sympathy of tears and sighs at their mutual [common] *calamity* [loss]."

What kind of sympathy is *tributary* sympathy? We have heard of tributary lands and tributary streams, but never before of tributary sympathy. And then the locution, "To offer sympathy at a calamity"—what does it mean?

The only advantage of reading Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson forward instead of backward is, that in reading him forward the syntax is better.

**Calculate.** "This word," says Hodgson, "bears nowadays a heavy load of ill-packed meanings, being used in Chambers's History of English Literature for *likely*, and in the following three passages for *fit*, *able*, and *suited*."

"He appeared *calculated* [fit?] for no other purpose than to augment the number of victims."

"It is not every painter who [that] is *calculated* [able] to show to so much advantage."

"He purposes to write the lives of certain of the English poets—a task for which he is most admirably *calculated*" [suited or qualified].

This making of *calculate* a sort of "maid of all work" is certainly not to be commended. The word means, To ascertain by computation; to reckon; to estimate; and, say some of the purists, it never means, when properly used, anything else. Cobbett, however, who is accounted one of the masters of English, says, "To her whose great example is so well *calculated* to inspire," etc.; and again, "The first two or three sentences are well *calculated*," etc.

*Calculate* is sometimes vulgarly used for *intend*, *purpose*, *expect*; as, "He *calculates* to get off to-morrow."

**Caliber.** This word is sometimes used very absurdly; as, "Brown's Essays are of a much higher *caliber* than Smith's." It is plain that the proper word to use here is *order*.

**Calligraphy.** This word is not, as many seem to think, a synonym of handwriting. It means the *art of writing beautifully*. A *scrawl*, therefore, can not properly be called *calligraphy*.

**Calumniate.** See ASPERSE.

**Can.** See MAY.

**Cant.** *Cant* is a kind of affectation; affectation is an effort to sail under false colors; an effort to sail under false colors is a kind of falsehood; and falsehood is a term of Latin origin that we often use instead of the stronger Saxon term LIE.

"Who is not familiar," writes Dr. William Matthews, "with scores of pet phrases and cant terms which [that] are repeated at this day apparently without a thought of



their meaning? Who ever attended a missionary meeting without hearing 'the Macedonian cry,' and an account of 'some little interest,' and 'fields white for the harvest'? Who is not weary of the ding-dong of 'our Zion,' and the solecism of 'in our midst'; and who does not long for a verbal millennium when Christians shall no longer 'feel to take' and 'grant to give'?"

"How much I regret," says Coleridge, "that so many religious persons of the present day think it necessary to adopt a certain cant of manner and phraseology [and of tone of voice] as a token to each other [one another]! They *improve* this and that text, and they must do so and so in a prayerful way; and so on."

"*Cant* is itself properly a double-distilled lie—the second power of a lie."—Carlyle.

**Capable.** This word is often improperly used in a passive sense, thus:

"Anything *capable* [susceptible] of being salified is salifiable."—Standard Dictionary.

"Anything *capable* [susceptible] of being saved or restored is salvable."—Standard Dictionary.

"We beg [leave] to repeat that we require [need?] more articles *capable* [susceptible] of pictorial illustration."—Phrenological Journal.

**Capacity.** See ABILITY.

**Caption.** This word is often used for *heading*, but, thus used, it is condemned by careful writers. The true meaning of *caption* is a seizure, an arrest. It does not come from a Latin word meaning a *head*, but from a Latin word meaning *to seize*.

**Caret.** Cobbett writes of the caret to his son: "The last thing I shall mention under this head is the *caret* [^], which is used to point upward to a part which [that] has

been omitted, and which [that] is inserted between the line where the caret is placed and the line above it. Things should be called by their right names, and this should be called the *blunder-mark*. I would have you, my dear James, scorn the use of the thing. *Think* before you write; let it be your custom to *write correctly* and in a *plain hand*. Be as careful that neatness, grammar, and sense prevail when you write to a blacksmith about shoeing a horse as when you write on the most important subjects. Habit is powerful in all cases; but its power in this case is truly wonderful. When you write, bear constantly in mind that some one is to *read* and to *understand* what you write. This will make your handwriting and also your meaning *plain*. Far, I hope, from my dear James will be the ridiculous, the contemptible, affectation of writing in a slovenly or illegible hand, or that of signing his name otherwise than in plain letters."

**Carnival.** A feast celebrated in Roman Catholic countries for a few days immediately before Lent. The literal meaning of the word is *farewell to flesh*.

A correspondent of the N. Y. Sun uses this word thus: "A great trotting carnival [= farewell to flesh] took place here to-day. There were five events [races] on the programme, exclusive of a trial of speed by Maud S. [the speed of Maud S]."

**Carry.** See BRING.

**Case.** Many persons of considerable culture continually make mistakes in conversation in the use of the cases, and we sometimes meet with gross errors of this kind in the writings of authors of repute. Witness the following: "And everybody is to know him except *I*."—George Meredith in *The Tragic Comedies*, Eng. ed., vol. i, p. 33. "Let's you and *I* go": say, *me*. We can not say, Let *I*

go. Properly, Let's go—i. e., Let us go, or, Let you and *me* go. "He is as good as *me*": say, as *I*. "She is as tall as *him*": say, as *he*. "You are older than *me*": say, than *I*. "Nobody said so but *he*": say, but *him*. "Every one can master a grief but *he* that hath it": correctly, but *him*. "John went out with James and *I*": say, and *me*. "You are stronger than *him*": say, than *he*. "Between you and *I*": say, and *me*. "Between you and *they*": say, and *them*. "He gave it to John and *I*": say, and *me*. "You told John and *I*": say, and *me*. "He sat between him and *I*": say, and *me*. "He expects to see you and *I*": say, and *me*. "You were a dunce to do it. Who? *me*?" say, *I*. Supply the ellipsis, and we should have, Who? *me* a dunce to do it? "Where are you going? Who? *me*?" say, *I*. We can't say, *me* going. "*Who* do you mean?" say, *whom*. "Was it *them*?" say, *they*. "If I *was* *him*, I would do it": say, *were* *he*. "If I *was* *her*, I would not go": say, *were* *she*. "Was it *him*?" say, *he*. "Was it *her*?" say, *she*. "For the benefit of those *whom* he thought were his friends": say, *who*. This error is not easy to detect on account of the parenthetical words that follow it. If we drop them, the mistake is very apparent; thus, "For the benefit of those *whom* were his friends."

"On the supposition," says Bain, "that the interrogative *who* has *whom* for its objective, the following are errors: '*who* do you take me to be?' '*who* should I meet the other day?' '*who* is it by?' '*who* did you give it to?' '*who* to?' '*who* for?' But, considering that these expressions *occur with the best writers and speakers*, that they are more energetic than the other form, and that they lead to no ambiguity, it may be doubted whether grammarians have not exceeded their province in condemning them."

Cobbett, in writing of the pronouns, says: "When the relatives are placed in the sentence at a distance from their antecedents or verbs or prepositions, the ear gives us no assistance. '*Who*, of all the men in the world, do you think I *saw* to-day?' '*Who*, for the sake of numerous services, the office was given to.' In both these cases it should be *whom*. Bring the verb in the first and the preposition in the second case closer to the relative, as, *who I saw, to who the office was given*, and you see the error at once. But take care! '*Whom*, of all the men in the world, do you think, *was* chosen to be sent as an ambassador?' '*Whom*, for the sake of his numerous services, *had* an office of honor bestowed upon him.' These are nominative cases, and ought to have *who*; that is to say, *who was chosen, who had an office*."

"Most grammarians," says Dr. Bain, in his Higher English Grammar, "have laid down this rule: 'The verb *to be* has the same case after as before it.' Macaulay censures the following as a solecism: 'It was *him* that Horace Walpole called a man who never made a bad figure but as an author.' Thackeray similarly adverts to the same deviation from the rule: "'Is that *him*?' said the lady in *questionable grammar*.' But, notwithstanding this," continues Dr. Bain, "we certainly hear in the actual speech of all classes of society such expressions as '*it was me*,' '*it was him*,' '*it was her*,' more frequently than the prescribed form.\* 'This shy creature, my brother says, is *me*'; 'were it *me*, I'd show him the difference.'—Clarissa Harlowe. 'It is not *me* † you are in love with.'—Addison. 'If there is

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\* If this is true in England, it is not true in America. Nowhere in the United States is such "questionable grammar" as this frequently heard in cultivated circles.

† "It may be confidently affirmed that with good speakers, in the

one character more base than another, it is *him* who,' etc.—Sydney Smith. 'If I were *him*'; 'if I had been *her*,' etc. The authority of good writers is strong on the side of objective forms. There is also the analogy of the French language; for while 'I am here' is *je suis ici*, the answer to 'who is there?' is *moi* (me); and *c'est moi* (it is me) is the legitimate phrase—never *c'est je* (it is I)."

But *moi*, according to all French grammarians, is very often in the nominative case. *Moi* is in the nominative case when used in reply to "Who is there?" and also in the phrase "*C'est moi*," which makes "It is *I*" the correct translation of the phrase, and not "It is *me*." The French equivalent of "I! I am here," is "*Moi! je suis ici*." The Frenchman uses *moi* in the nominative case when *je* would not be euphonious. Euphony with him, in speaking, is a matter of more importance than grammatical correctness. Bescherelle gives many examples of *moi* in the nominative. Here are two of them: "*Mon avocat et moi sommes de cet avis. Qui veut aller avec lui? Moi.*" If we use such phraseology as "It is *me*," we must do as the French do—consider *me* as being in the nominative case, and offer *euphony* as our reason for thus using it.

When shall we put nouns (or pronouns) preceding verbal, or participial, nouns, as they are called by some grammarians—infinitives in *ing*, as they are called by others—in the possessive case?

"'I am surprised at *John's* (or *his*, *your*, etc.) *refusing* to go.' 'I am surprised at *John* (or *him*, *you*, etc.) *refusing* to go.' [In the latter sentence *refusing* is a participle.] The latter construction is not so common with pronouns as with nouns, especially with such nouns as do not readily

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case of negation, *not me* is the usual practice."—Bain. This, I confidently affirm, is not true in America.—A. A.

take the possessive form. 'They prevented *him going* forward': better, 'They prevented *his going* forward.' 'He was dismissed without any *reason being* assigned.' 'The boy died through his *clothes being* burned.' 'We hear little of any *connection being* kept up between the two nations.' 'The men rowed vigorously for fear of the *tide turning* against us.' *But most examples of the construction without the possessive form are* OBVIOUSLY DUE TO MERE SLOVENLINESS. . . . 'In case of *your being* absent': here *being* is an infinitive [verbal, or participial, noun] qualified by the possessive *your*. 'In case of your being present': here *being* would have to be construed as a participle. *The possessive construction is, in this case, the primitive and regular construction*; THE OTHER IS A MERE LAPSE. The difficulty of adhering to the possessive form occurs when the subject is not a person: 'It does not seem safe to rely on the rule of *demand creating* supply': in strictness, '*Demand's* creating supply.' 'A petition was presented against the *license being* granted.' But for the awkwardness of extending the possessive to impersonal subjects, it would be right to say, 'against the *license's being* granted.' 'He had conducted the ball without any *complaint being* urged against him.' The possessive would be suitable, but undesirable and unnecessary."—Professor Alexander Bain.

"Though the *ordinary* syntax of the possessive case is sufficiently plain and easy, there is, perhaps, among all the puzzling and disputable points of grammar, nothing more difficult of decision than are some questions that occur respecting the right management of this case. The observations that have been made show that possessives before participles are seldom to be approved. The following example is manifestly inconsistent with itself, and, *in my*

*opinion, the three possessives are all wrong: 'The kitchen, too, now begins to give dreadful note of preparation; not from armorers accomplishing the knights, but from the shopmaid's chopping forcemeat, the apprentice's cleaning knives, and the journeyman's receiving a practical lesson in the art of waiting at table.'* 'The daily instances of *men's* dying around us.' Say rather, 'Of *men* dying around us.' The leading word in sense ought not to be made the adjunct in construction."—Goold Brown.

\* **Casualty.** This word is often heard with the incorrect addition of a syllable—*casuality*—which is not recognized by the lexicographers.

*Casualty* is frequently misused for *accident*. *Accident*, *contingency*, and *casualty*, according to Crabb, all imply things that take place independently of our intentions. *Accidents* are more than *contingencies*, and *casualties* have regard simply to circumstances. *Accidents* are frequently occasioned by carelessness, but *casualties* are altogether independent of ourselves. We are all exposed to the most calamitous *accidents*; our happiness depends upon many *contingencies*; the best concerted scheme may be thwarted by *casualties* that no foresight can prevent.

"This deformity has the same effect in natural faults as maiming and mutilation has from *accidents*."—Burke.

"Men are exposed to more *casualties* than women, as battles, sea voyages, with several dangerous trades and professions."—Addison.

**Celebrity.** "A number of *celebrities* witnessed the first representation." This word is frequently used, especially in the newspapers, as a concrete term; but it would be better to use it in its abstract sense only, and, in sentences like the one above, to say *distinguished persons*.

**Character—Reputation.** These two words are not

synonyms, though often used as such. *Character* means the sum of distinguishing qualities. "Actions, looks, words, steps, form the alphabet by which you may spell characters."—Lavater. *Reputation* means the estimation in which one is held. One's reputation, then, is what is thought of one's character; consequently, one may have a good reputation and a bad character, or a good character and a bad reputation. Calumny may injure *reputation*, but not *character*. Sir Peter does not leave his *character* behind him, but his *reputation*—his *good name*.

**Cheap.** The dictionaries define this adjective as meaning, bearing a low price, or to be had at a low price; but nowadays good usage makes it mean that a thing may be had, or has been sold, at a bargain. Hence, in order to make sure of being understood, it is better to say *low-priced*, when one means low-priced, than to use the word *cheap*. What is low-priced, as everybody knows, is often *dear*, and what is high-priced is often *cheap*. A diamond necklace might be *cheap* at ten thousand dollars, and a pinchbeck necklace dear at ten dollars.

**Cherubim.** The Hebrew plural of *cherub*. "We are authorized," says Dr. Campbell, "both by use and analogy, to say either *cherubs* and *seraphs*, according to the English idiom, or *cherubim* and *seraphim*, according to the Oriental. The former suits better the familiar, the latter the solemn, style. As the words *cherubim* and *seraphim* are plural, the terms *cherubims* and *seraphims*, as expressing the plural, are quite improper."—Philosophy of Rhetoric.

**Chiefly.** This is one of quite a list of words that are often misplaced.

"In my last conversation with Mr. Benjamin he *chiefly spoke of* [spoke chiefly of] luminaries of the English bench and bar."



**Childish.** Occasionally misused for *childlike*, as it is in the following sentence :

“Her [Taglioni’s] difficulty seems to be to keep to the floor. You have the feeling, while you gaze upon her, that if she were to rise and float away like Ariel, you would scarce be surprised ; yet all is done with such a *childish* unconsciousness of admiration that the delight with which she fills you is unmingled.”

*Childish* ways are always offensive in those that have, in years, ceased to be children.

**Citizen.** This word properly means, one who has certain political rights ; when, therefore, it is used, as it often is, to designate persons who may be aliens, it, to say the least, betrays a want of care in the selection of words. “Several *citizens* were injured by the explosion.” Here some other word—*persons*, for example—should be used.

**Claim.** Says Prof. J. S. Blackwell : “*Claim* in the sense of *maintain* is too modern to have much authority other than that of newspaper hacks.”

Says Mr. Gilbert M. Tucker, of The Cultivator and Country Gentleman : “Allow me to call your attention to one important and disgusting blunder not noted by you—the use of *claim* for *say*, *assert*, *think*, or *maintain*. I think this is far more frequently heard, taking the country through, than the opposite error of using *allow* in the same way.”

**Clever.** In this country the word *clever* is most improperly used in the sense of good-natured, well-disposed, good-hearted. It is properly used in the sense in which we are wont most inelegantly to use the word *smart*, though it is a less colloquial term, and is of wider application. In England the phrase “a *clever* man” is the equivalent of the French phrase, “*un homme d’esprit*.” The word is properly used in the following sentences : “Every work of

Archbishop Whately must be an object of interest to the admirers of *clever* reasoning"; "Cobbett's letter . . . very *clever*, but very mischievous"; "Bonaparte was certainly as *clever* a man as ever [has] lived."

**Climax.** A clause, a sentence, a paragraph, or any literary composition whatsoever, is said to end with a *climax* when, by an artistic arrangement, the more effective is made to follow the less effective in regular gradation. Any great departure from the order of ascending strength is called an *anti-climax*. Here are some examples of climax :

"Give all diligence ; add to your faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

"What is every year of a wise man's life but a criticism on the past ! Those whose life is the shortest live long enough to laugh at one half of it ; the boy despises the infant, the man the boy, the sage both, and the Christian all."

"What a piece of work is man ! how noble in reason ! how infinite in faculties ! in form and moving, how express and admirable ! in action, how like an angel ! in apprehension, how like a god !"

The word *climax* should not be used for *acme*. They are not even synonyms.

"Epistolary novel-writing reached the *acme* of its popularity with Richardson's tales." Correctly used.

"The glories of the age of Louis XIV were the *climax* [*aeme*] of a set of ideas."

"They are not only the very *climax* [*acme*] of human evil, but the most characteristic types of French vice."

**Commence.** The Britons use, or misuse, this word in a manner peculiar to themselves. They say, for example, "commenced merchant," "commenced actor," "commenced politician," and so on. Dr. Hall tells us that *commence* has been employed in the sense of "begin to be," "become," "set up as," by first-class writers, for more than two centuries. Careful speakers make small use of *commence* in any sense; they prefer to use its Saxon equivalent, *begin*.

"The same persons," says Godfrey Turner, "who habitually discard the word *many*, when they have a chance of glorying in *numerous*, have concurred in giving the cold shoulder to *begin*. I do not know a more flagrant dandyism of speech than *commence to*. 'Directly I commence to speak every one commences to look at me,' said a mincing miss at a suburban 'At Home.' There are mincing misses of the male sex in authorship who are always *commencing to*. Female authors are seldom caught at this feminine weakness of phrase. The verb *commence*, if not followed by some other verb in the infinitive mood, may be tolerated for a change. Though it is not to be found anywhere in the Bible (imagine 'In the *commencement*'!), it occurs a few times in Shakespeare; as many as thirteen times in all, reckoning the inflections *commenced*, *commencing*, and *commencement*. Set this account against the number of times Shakespeare uses the word *begin*. I am not going to count, but I find a double row of them in Mrs. Cowden Clarke's Concordance, nearly as long as the line of Smith, John, in the Post Office London Directory, or of area railings along Wimpole Street."

*Begin* is opposed to *end*; *commence* to *complete*: one *begins* a thing with a view of *ending* it; one *commences* a thing with a view of *completing* it. "Happiness frequently *ends* where prosperity *begins*."

"Work will be *commenced* to-day, and some fourteen miles of road is to be *completed* in two years."—N. Y. Times.

If *completed* is retained, *commenced* should also be retained; as, however, the road may be *finished* and still be very *incomplete*, the diction would be improved by substituting *begun* for *commenced* and *finished* for *completed*, which would probably better express the writer's thought. See BEGIN.

**Comparison.** When only two objects are compared, the comparative, and not the superlative, degree should be used; thus, "Mary is the *older* of the two"; "John is the *stronger* of the two"; "Brown is the *richer* of the two, and the *richest* man in the city"; "Which is the *more* desirable, health or wealth?" "Which is the *most* desirable, health, wealth, or genius?"

"Of two such lessons, why forget  
The *nobler* and the *manlier* one?"

**Completed.** This word is often incorrectly used for *finished*. That is *complete* that lacks nothing; that is *finished* that has had all done to it that was intended. The builder of a house may *finish* it and yet leave it very *incomplete*.

**Condign.** It is safe to say that most persons who use this word do not know its meaning, which is, suitable, deserved, merited, proper. "His endeavors shall not lack *condign* praise"—i. e., his endeavors shall not lack *proper* or their *merited* praise. "A villain *condignly* punished" is a villain punished *according to his deserts*. To use *condign* in the sense of *severe* is just as incorrect as it would be to use *deserved* or *merited* in the sense of *severe*.

"There was a Parliamentary surrender at discretion to stop further inquiry and [to] save the plotters, big and

little, from *condign* [= deserved] and most deserved punishment."

" 'He deserves some *condign* [= deserved] punishment,' cried Mrs. Grantham."

"Practical punishment does not deserve *condign* [= deserved] punishment the less because it often succeeds in escaping it."

**Condone** means *to pardon, to forgive*. "The public will gladly *condone* his earlier errors." Webster says it means, "to forgive for a violation of the marriage vow." It is sometimes misused for *compensate*, and *atone for*.

"The abolition of the income tax more than *condones* [atones] for the turmoil of an election."

"There was a certain vague earnestness of belief about him which [that] qualified and *condoned* [compensated] the shrewd and sometimes jocular look of his father."

**Confirmed invalid.** This phrase is a convenient mode of expressing the idea it conveys, but it is difficult to defend, inasmuch as *confirmed* means strengthened, established.

**Congregate together.** A pleonastic expression often met with. *Congregate*, unaided, means to collect or gather together; to assemble.

"A large number of swallows *congregated together*, as if holding a convention, most likely on the condition of the bridge, as a number have built their nests among the unsafe timbers."—Kansas City Journal.

**Conquer.** This word is often employed when the better word would be *overcome*, or *vanquish*. The leading idea in *conquer* is that of getting; in *overcome* and *vanquish*, that of getting the better of. Wellington *overcame* or *vanquished* Napoleon at Waterloo. Alexander *con-*

quered the Persians after having overcome Darius in three great battles.

**Consequence.** This word is sometimes used instead of *importance* or *moment*; as, "They were all persons of more or less *consequence*": read, "of more or less *importance*." "It is a matter of no *consequence*": read, "of no *moment*."

**Consider.** "This word," says Mr. Richard Grant White, in his *Words and Their Uses*, "is perverted from its true meaning by most of those who use it." *Consider* means, to meditate, to deliberate, to reflect, to revolve in the mind; and yet it is made to do service for *think*, *suppose*, and *regard*. Thus: "I *consider* [think] his course very unjustifiable"; "I have always *considered* [thought] it my duty," etc.; "I *consider* [regard or look upon] him as being the cleverest man of my acquaintance."

**Contemptible.** This word is sometimes used for *contemptuous*. An old story says that a man once said to Dr. Parr, "Sir, I have a *contemptible* opinion of you." "That does not surprise me," returned the doctor; "all your opinions are *contemptible*." What is worthless or weak is *contemptible*. Despicable is a word that expresses a still more intense degree of the contemptible. A traitor is a *despicable* character, while a poltroon is only *contemptible*.

"It contributed a good deal to confirm me in the *contemptible* [contemptuous] idea I always entertained of Cellarius."

"Having expressed himself in terms of abhorrence of a piece of baseness and treachery, the delinquent said, 'Well, sir, perhaps some day you may change your opinion of me.' 'Perhaps I may, sir,' was the reply, 'for if I should find any one who holds a more *contemptible* [contemptuous]

opinion of you than I do myself, I should lay down my own and take up his."

**Continually.** See PERPETUALLY.

**Continue on.** The *on* in this phrase is usually superfluous. "We continued on our way" is idiomatic English, and is more euphonious than the sentence would be without the particle. The meaning is, "We continued to travel *on* our way." In such sentences, however, as "Continue *on*," "He continued to read *on*," "The fever continued *on* for some hours," and the like, the *on* usually serves no purpose.

**Continuous—Continual.** "A *continuous* action is one that is uninterrupted, and goes on unceasingly *as long as it lasts*, though that time may be longer or shorter. *Continual* is that which is constantly renewed and recurring, though it may be uninterrupted as frequently as it is renewed. A storm of wind or rain which [that] never intermits an instant, is *continuous*; a succession of showers is *continual*. If I am exposed to *continual* interruptions I can not pursue a *continuous* train of thought."—Whately's Synonyms.

"The adoption of *continuous* brakes on the British railways is becoming general. Let us hope that the result may be by means of the *continuous* brakes to avoid the *continual* smash."—Judy. See PERPETUALLY.

**Conversationist.** This word is to be preferred to *conversationalist*. Mr. Richard Grant White says that *conversationalist* and *agriculturalist* are inadmissible. On the other hand, Dr. Fitzedward Hall says: "As for *conversationist* and *conversationalist*, *agriculturist* and *agriculturalist*, as all are alike legitimate formations, it is for convention to decide which we are to prefer."

**Converse.** In logic, the word *conversion* signifies that

the terms of a proposition are transposed, the subject becoming predicate, the predicate, subject ; thus, "Some boasters are cowards ; therefore, *conversely*, some cowards are boasters."

"To have wit, it is necessary to be endowed with a good understanding. The *converse* of this proposition is not true."

"Though it be [is] true that every religious man must be honest, the *converse* does not follow, that every honest man must be religious."

"The king of solitude is also the king of society. The *reverse* [converse] is not true."

"While our corn laws lasted we acted the *converse* [reverse] of the Roman policy."

*Converse* is sometimes misused for *reverse*, *inverse*, *opposite*.

**Convoke—Convene.** At one time and another there has been some discussion with regard to the correct use of these two words. According to Crabb, "There is nothing imperative on the part of those that *assemble* or *convene*, and nothing binding on those *assembled* or *convened*: one *assembles* or *convenes* by invitation or request ; one attends to the notice or not, at pleasure. *Convoke*, on the other hand, is *an act of authority* ; it is the call of one who has the authority to give the call ; it is heeded by those who feel themselves bound to attend." Properly, then, President Arthur *convokes*, not *convenes*, the Senate.

**Co-operate together.** If I had found this expression in a publication less fastidious than the fastidious Independent, and if it had been from the pen of a man less cultured than the cultured Rev. George Washburn, I should not have thought it worth while to call attention to its pleonastic inelegance. *Co-operate* means, to act, to operate, or



to labor with one another to the same end; and *operate together* means, to act, to operate, or to labor with one another to the same end; hence, *co-operate together* means *co-operate*, or *operate together*, and can mean no more, which makes it plain that the *co* or the *together* serves no purpose—is a superfluity.

Farther on, Mr. Washburn talks about making an “experimental *attempt* at co-operation a permanent *institution*.” Make an attempt an institution! If the reverend gentleman’s preaching and praying are not better than his logic and rhetoric he is not likely to save many souls.

**Corporeal—Corporal.** These adjectives, though regarded as synonyms, are not used indiscriminately. *Corporal* is used in reference to the body, or animal frame, in its proper sense; *corporeal*, to the animal substance in an extended sense—opposed to spiritual. *Corporal* punishment; *corporeal* or *material* form or substance.

“That to *corporeal* substances could add

Speed most spiritual.”—Milton.

“What seemed *corporal*

Melted as breath into the wind.”—Shakespeare.

**Couple.** In its primitive signification this word does not mean simply two, but two that are united by some bond; such as, for example, the tie that unites the sexes. It has, however, been so long used to mean two of a kind considered together, that in this sense it may be deemed permissible, though the substituting of the word *two* for it would often materially improve the diction.

**Courage.** See BRAVERY.

**Create.** “Mme. Carvalho . . . has been before the public thirty-five years, during seventeen of which she *created* [i. e., brought into being; caused to exist] fifteen distinct rôles [parts]”.—N. Y. Sun. If Mme. Carvalho

*created* these fifteen parts, what did the librettists do for them? Miss Rose Eytinge tells us that she *created* the part of Armande in *Led Astray*, at the Union Square Theater in 1873. Now, if Miss E. *created* the part of Armande, what did Octave Feuillet do who wrote *Tentation*, the French play; and what did Dion Boucicault do, who put *Tentation* into its English dress, and daily, for a month or more, directed the rehearsals? For this absurd use of the verb *to create* we are indebted (!) to the vanity of the players.

**Creditable.** We sometimes see *credible*, which means, worthy of approbation, reputable, honorable, misused for *credible*, which means, worthy of belief, that may be believed.

"Two *credible* [credible] witnesses, without having any communication one with another, affirmed the appearance of the same man."

"I am *credibly* [credibly] informed that the Duke of Argyle can assemble five thousand men in arms."

**Crime—Vice—Sin.** The confusion that exists in the use of these words is due largely to an imperfect understanding of their respective meanings. *Crime* is the violation of the law of a state; hence, as the laws of states differ, what is crime in one state may not be crime in another. *Vice* is a course of wrong-doing, and is not modified either by country, religion, or condition. As for *sin*, it is very difficult to define what it is, as what is sinful in the eyes of one man may not be sinful in the eyes of another; what is sinful in the eyes of a Jew may not be sinful in the eyes of a Christian; and what is sinful in the eyes of a Christian of one country may not be sinful in the eyes of a Christian of another country. In the days of slavery, to harbor a run-

away slave was a *crime*, but it was, in the eyes of most people, neither a *vice* nor a *sin*.

**Crushed out.** "The rebellion was finally *crushed out*." Out of what? We may *crush* the life out of a man, or *crush* a man to death, and *crush*—not *crush out*—a rebellion.

**Cultured.** This word is said to be a product of Boston—an excellent place for anybody or anything to come from. Many persons object to its use on the ground that there can be no such participial adjective, because there is no verb in use from which to form it. We have in use the substantive *culture*, but, though the dictionaries recognize the verb *to culture*, we do not use it. Be this objection valid or be it not, *cultured* having but two syllables, while its synonym *cultivated* has four, it is likely to find favor with those that employ short words when they convey their meaning as well as long ones. Other adjectives of this kind are, moneyed, whiskered, slippered, lettered, talented, cottaged, liliated, anguished, gifted, and so forth. See TALENTED.

**Dangerous.** This word is often used very incorrectly in speaking of persons that are ill. "He is sick, but not *dangerous*"; say, not *in danger*, or, not *dangerously*.

**Dearest.** "A gentleman once began a letter to his bride thus: 'My *dearest* Maria.' The lady replied: 'My dear John, I beg that you will mend either your morals or your grammar. You call me your "*dearest* Maria"; am I to understand that you have other Marias'?"—Moon's Bad English.

The editor of the Brooklyn Daily News believes in using superlatives; he says: "It will be many years, we apprehend, before lovers will discontinue calling one another 'dearest' at Mr. Ayres's particular request. When an ardent young man addresses his mistress as 'My dearest

Maria,' it does not imply that he has a number of Marias, whatever the author of *The Verbalist* may think about it: it implies that of all the things in the world his Maria is the dearest, and it is quite right for the young gentleman to say so. Affection deals in superlatives, and a lover who will not or can not use them is a cold-hearted humbug. In short, Mr. Ayres has set forth on a fool's errand when he attempts to reform a language in no serious need of reformation by *the establishment of* [establishing] such arbitrary rules as he sets forth. There are too many restrictions upon speech already, and it were better to violate every grammatic and rhetorical dogma than to have our literature hedged around in a dead level of commonplaces. When a man has an earnest thought, no matter how he blurts it out so that the language fit the meaning, and if it has a glow and sincerity that defies conventional forms, so much the better. Even Mr. Ayres is at his best when he is maddest."

But then, you see, there would be very little good in Mr. Ayres's best if he didn't observe some of the rules of grammar and rhetoric. As for addressing one's sweetheart as one's "dearest," no one but a bloodless pedant would seriously object to it.

**Decade** means the sum or number of ten. "He put one in each *decade* to death." It is used by many good writers nowadays precisely as we use the word *century*.

"We can not expect that three *decades* of equality before the law should obliterate the passions and prejudices induced by three *centuries* of wrong and insult."

"Between 1870 and '80, probably about the middle of the *decade*."

Many other writers seem to prefer *decade of years*.

"During the last *decade of years*."—Gladstone.

**Deceiving.** "You are *deceiving* me." Not infrequently *deceiving* is used when the speaker means *trying to deceive*. It is when we do not suspect deception that we are deceived.

**Decimate.** The Latin word from which this word comes, meant, in the olden time, *the taking of the tenth*, as the taking of every tenth soldier for punishment by death, or the taking of the tenth of a subject's produce as a yearly tax. In writing of the things that occur nowadays the word should not be used.

**Demean.** This word should not be used in the sense of, *to lower, to debase, to disgrace, to humble oneself*. Its true meaning is, *to conduct oneself, to bear oneself, to carry oneself*. When we say that a man *de-means* himself—i. e., that he conducts or behaves himself—like a gentleman, or a blackguard, as the case may be, we use the word in its proper sense.

"Zerlina, after having mourned her husband's death for a decent time, *demeans* [should be, lowers or disgraces] herself by marrying a former lover."

**Denude.** "The vulture," says Brande, "has some part of the head and sometimes of the neck *denuded* of feathers." Most birds might be *denuded* of the feathers on their heads; not so, however, the vulture, for his head is always featherless. A thing can not be *denuded* of what it does not have. Denuding a vulture's head and neck of the feathers is like *denuding* an eel of its scales.

As *denude* means, to strip the covering from, to make naked, the use of the word in the following sentence could not be easily defended:

"Lake P. is reported as being almost *denuded* of its large fish."—N. Y. Sun.

**Depart.** Lovers of big words often use *depart* when

*go* or *set out* or *off* would express their thought just as well, and be much better diction.

"That functionary, on this particular occasion, had *departed* [set out, or off] with his burden somewhat late in the evening."

"Mr. Blaine *departs* [leaves here] for Bar Harbor tomorrow, to remain for an indefinite period. He will spend the Sabbath [Sunday] with Senator Eugene Hale, in Elsworth."

**Deprecate.** Strangely enough, this word is often misused in the sense of disapprove, censure, condemn; as, "He *deprecates* the whole proceeding"; "Your course, from first to last, is universally *depreciated*." But, according to the authorities, the word really means, to endeavor to avert by prayer; to pray exemption or deliverance from; to beg off; to entreat; to urge against.

"Daniel kneeled upon his knees to *deprecate* the captivity of his people."—Hewyt.

**Description.** This word is very often and very absurdly made to do service for *kind* or *sort*, thus:

"His manners were, in truth, not always of the most amiable *description*."

"But little trace has been left of Roman occupation, and such remains as have been discovered are mainly of the portable *description* that affords little proof of actual settlement."

**Desirous.** See ANXIOUS.

**Desperately.** "A Spanish victory which [that] was of the most signal character, if Marti was killed and Gomez was *desperately* wounded."

No painstaking writer would use *desperately* as it is used here.

**Despite.** This word is often incorrectly preceded by

*in* and followed by *of*; thus, "*In despite of* all our efforts to detain him, he set out"; which should be, "*Despite* all our efforts," etc., or "*In spite of* all our efforts," etc.

**Detect.** Often misused for *distinguish*, *recognize*, *discover*, *see*.

"I did not *detect* [discover] anything wrong in his appearance."

"I could not *detect* [see] any difference between them."

"They may be easily *detected* [recognized] by their knowing look or from [by] the stolid, almost idiotic, expression," etc.

**Deteriorate** means, properly, *to make* or *to grow worse*, but is sometimes misused in the sense of *to take away*, *to detract*, *to lessen*, *to depreciate*.

"Does it *deteriorate from* [lessen] Milton's greatness that he could not have given us the conception of Falstaff?"

"You must not consider [think] that I wish to *deteriorate* in any degree from the merits of the man." [Read *depreciate*, or *underrate*.]

The word is correctly used thus: Among the unlettered, morals as well as manners *deteriorate*.

**Determined.** See BOUND.

**Diametrically.** Sometimes misused for *absolutely*.

"Motives and acts which [that] are not only without foundation, but [are] *diametrically* [absolutely] untrue."

The word is correctly used thus: "His version of the story is *diametrically* opposite to the truth." Here we have the two ends of the diameter.

**Diction.** This is a general term, and is applicable to a single sentence or to a connected composition. *Bad diction* may be due to errors in grammar, to a confused disposition of words, or to an improper use of words, *Diction*,

to be good, requires to be only correct and clear. Of excellent examples of bad diction there are very many in a little work by Dr. L. T. Townsend, Professor of Sacred Rhetoric in Boston University, the first volume of which has lately come under my notice. The first ten lines of Dr. Townsend's preface are :

"The leading genius<sup>1</sup> of the People's College at Chautauqua Lake, with a [the ?] view of providing for his course<sup>2</sup> a text-book, asked for the publication of the following laws and principles of speech.<sup>3</sup>

"The author, not seeing sufficient reason<sup>4</sup> for withholding what had been of much practical benefit<sup>5</sup> to himself, consented.<sup>6</sup>

"The subject-matter herein contained is an outgrowth from<sup>7</sup> occasional instructions<sup>8</sup> given<sup>9</sup> while occupying<sup>10</sup> the chair<sup>11</sup> of Sacred Rhetoric."

1. The phrase *leading genius* is badly chosen. Founder, projector, head, organizer, principal, or president—some one of these terms would probably have been appropriate. 2. What "course"? Race course, course of ethics, æsthetics, rhetoric, or what? \* 3. "The following laws and principles of speech." And how came these laws and principles in existence? Who made them? We are to infer, it would seem, that Professor Townsend made them, and that the world would have had to go without the laws that govern language and the principles on which language is formed had it pleased Professor Townsend to withhold them. 4. "*Sufficient* reason"! Then there were reasons why Professor Townsend ought to have kept these good things all to himself; only, they were not *sufficient*. 5. "Practical benefit"! Is there any such thing as impractical benefit?

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\* Should be, *a text-book for his course*, and not, *for his course a text-book*



Are not all benefits practical? and, if they are, what purpose does the epithet *practical* serve? 6. "Consented" to what? It is easy to see that the Doctor means *acceded to the request*, but he is a long way from saying so. The object writers usually have in view is to convey thought, not to set their readers to guessing. 7. *The outgrowth of* would be English. 8. "Occasional instructions"! Very vague, and well calculated to set the reader to guessing again. 9. "Given to" whom? 10. *Holding*. We occupy a chair when we sit in it, and fill an office when we discharge its duties. Dr. Townsend *held* the chair, but he did not fill it. 11. "*The chair*." The definite article made it necessary for the writer to specify what particular chair of sacred rhetoric he meant.

These ten lines are a fair specimen of the diction of the entire volume. I know of no other book—not one—so badly written, and yet the Rev. Doctor sends it out as a teacher of those persons that are desirous to better their knowledge of English. An endeavor to better one's knowledge of English by studying such books as Townsend's *Art of Speech* is not unlike an endeavor to better one's morals by associating with thieves. Dr. Townsend, like many another, mistakes a verbal flux he is afflicted with for literary aptitude.

Page 131. "To render a *given ambiguous or* unintelligible sentence transparent, the following suggestions are recommended." The words in italics are unnecessary, since what is ambiguous is unintelligible. Then, who has ever heard of *recommending suggestions*?

Dr. Townsend speaks of *mastering a subject before publishing it*. Publishing a subject?

Page 133. "Violations of simplicity, whatever the type, show either that *the mind of the writer* is tainted with affec-

tation, or *else* that *an effort is making* to conceal *conscious* poverty of *sentiment* under loftiness of expression." Here is an example of a kind of sentence that can be mended in only one way—by rewriting, which might be done thus: Violations of simplicity, whatever the type, show either that the writer is tainted with affectation, or that he is making an effort to conceal poverty of thought under loftiness of expression.

Page 143. "This *quality* is fully *stated* and recommended," etc. Who has ever heard of *stating a quality*?

On page 145 Dr. Townsend says: "A person can not read a single book of poor style without having his own style vitiated." *A book of poor style* is an awkward expression, to say the least. *A single badly-written book* would have been unobjectionable.

Page 160. "The presented picture produces instantly a definite effect." Why this unusual disposition of words? Why not say, in accordance with the idiom of the language, "The picture presented instantly produces," etc.?

Page 161. "The boy studies . . . geography, and hates everything connected with the sea and land." Why *the* boy? As there are few things besides seals and turtles that are connected with the sea *and* land, the boy in question has few things to hate.

On page 175 Dr. Townsend heads a chapter thus: "*Art* of acquiring *Skill* in the use of Poetic Speech." This reminds one of the man that tried to lift himself over a fence by taking hold of the seat of his breeches. "*How* to acquire skill" is probably what is meant.

On page 232, "Jeremy Taylor is among the best models of long sentences which are both clear and logical." Jeremy Taylor is a clear and logical long sentence?! True, our learned rhetorician says so, but he doesn't mean it. He

means, "In Jeremy Taylor we find some of the best examples of long sentences that are at once clear and logical."

Since the foregoing was written, the second volume of Professor Townsend's *Art of Speech* has been published. In the brief preface to this volume we find this characteristic sentence: "The author has felt that *clergymen* more than *those* of other professions will study this treatise." The antecedent of the relative *those* being *clergymen*, the sentence, it will be perceived, says: "The author has felt that *clergymen* more than *clergymen of other professions* will study this treatise." Comment on such "art" as Professor Townsend's is not necessary.

I find several noteworthy examples of bad diction in an article in a recent number of an Australian magazine. The following are some of them: "*Large capital* always manages to make *itself* master of the situation; it is the small capitalist and the small landholder that would suffer," etc. Should be, "*The large capitalist . . . himself*," etc.

Again: "The small farmer would . . . be despoiled . . . of the meager profit which *strenuous* labor had conquered from the *reluctant* soil." Not only are the epithets in italics superfluous, and consequently weakening in their effect, but idiom does not permit *strenuous* to be used to qualify *labor*: *hard* labor and *strenuous* effort.

Again: "Capital has always the choice *of* a large field." Should be, "the choice *offered by* a large field."

Again: "Should capital be withdrawn, tenements would soon prove insufficient." Should be, "*the number of* tenements would," etc.

Again: "Men of wealth, therefore, would find their Fifth Avenue mansions and their summer villas a little more burdened with taxes, but with this increase happily balanced by the exemption of their bonds and mortgages,

their plate and furniture." The thought here is so simple that we easily divine it ; but if we look at the sentence at all carefully, we find that, though we supply the ellipses in the most charitable manner possible, the sentence really says : " Men would find their mansions more burdened, but would find them with this increased burden happily balanced by the exemption," etc. The sentence should have been framed somewhat in this wise : " Men . . . would find their . . . mansions . . . more burdened with taxes, but this increase in the taxes on their real estate would be happily balanced by the exemption from taxation of their bonds, mortgages, plate, and furniture."

Again : " Men generally . . . would be inclined to laugh at the idea of intrusting the modern politician with such gigantic opportunities for enriching his favorites." We do not *intrust* one another with *opportunities*. To *enrich* would better the diction.

Again : " The value of land that has accrued from labor is not . . . a just object for confiscation." Correctly : " The value of land that has *resulted* from labor is not *justly* . . . an object *of* confiscation." *Accrue* is properly used more in the sense of *spontaneous growth*.

Again : " If the state attempts to confiscate this increase by means of taxes, either rentals will increase correspondingly, or such a check will be put upon *the growth of each place* and *all the enterprises connected with it* that greater injury would be done than if things had been left untouched." We have here, it will be observed, a confusion of moods ; the sentence begins in the indicative and ends in the conditional. The words in italics are worse than superfluous. Rewritten : " If the state *should* attempt to confiscate this increase by means of taxes, either rentals *would* increase correspondingly, or such a check *would* be

put upon growth and enterprise that greater injury would," etc.

Again: "The *theory* that land . . . is a *boon* of Nature, to which every person has an inalienable right equal to every other person, is not new." The words *theory* and *boon* are here misused. A *theory* is a system of suppositions. The things man receives from Nature are *gifts*, not *boons*: the gift of reason, the gift of speech, etc. The sentence should be: "The *declaration* (or *assertion*) that land . . . is a *gift* of Nature, to which every person has an inalienable right equal to *that of any* other person, is not new." Or, more simply and quite as forcibly: ". . . to which one person has an inalienable right equal to that of another, is not new." Or, more simply still, and more forcibly: ". . . to which one *man* has as good a right as another, is not new." By substituting the word *man* for *person*, we have a word of one syllable that here expresses all that the longer word expresses. The fewer the syllables, if the thought be fully expressed, the more vigorous the diction. Inalienability being foreign to the discussion, the long word *inalienable* only encumbers the sentence.

"We have thus <sup>1</sup> passed in review <sup>2</sup> the changes and improvements <sup>3</sup> which the revision contains <sup>4</sup> in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. It has <sup>5</sup> not, indeed, <sup>6</sup> been possible to refer to <sup>7</sup> them all; but so many illustrations <sup>8</sup> have been given in <sup>9</sup> the several classes described that the reader will have <sup>10</sup> a satisfactory <sup>11</sup> survey of the whole subject. Whatever may be said of other portions <sup>12</sup> of the New Testament, we think it will be generally admitted that in this Epistle the changes have improved the old <sup>13</sup> translation. They are such as <sup>14</sup> make the English version <sup>15</sup> conform more completely <sup>16</sup> to the Greek original. If this be <sup>17</sup> true, the revisers have done a good work for the Church.<sup>18</sup> If it

be true<sup>19</sup> with regard to all the New Testament books, the work which they have done will remain<sup>20</sup> a blessing to the readers of those books for<sup>21</sup> generations to come. But the blessing will be only in the clearer presentation of the Divine truth, and, therefore, it will be only to the glory of God."

This astonishingly slipshod bit of composition is from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Timothy Dwight. If the learned Professor of Divinity in Yale College deemed it worth while to give a little thought to manner as well as to matter, it is probable that his diction would be very different from what it is; and if he were to give a few minutes to the making of verbal corrections in the foregoing paragraph, he would, perhaps, do something like this: 1. Change *thus* to *now*. 2. Write *some* of the changes. 3. Strike out *and improvements*. 4. For *contains changes* substitute some other form of expression. 5. Instead of *has been*, write *was*. 6. Strike out *indeed*. 7. Instead of *refer to*, write *cite*. 8. Change *illustrations* to *examples*. 9. Instead of *in*, write *of*. 10. Instead of *the reader will have*, write *the reader will be able to get*. 11. Change *satisfactory* to *tolerable*. 12. Change *portions* to *parts*. 13. Not talk of the *old* translation, as we have no new one. 14. Strike out as superfluous the words *are such as*. 15. Change *version* to *text*. 16. Substitute *nearly* for *completely*, which does not admit of comparison. 17. Substitute the indicative for the conditional. 18. End sentence with the word *work*. 19. Introduce *also* after *be*. 20. Instead of *remain*, in the sense of *be*, use *be*. 21. Introduce *the* after *for*. As for the last sentence, it reminds one of Mendelssohn's Songs without Words, though here we have, instead of a song and no words, words and no song, or rather no meaning. As is often true of cant, we have here simply a syntactical arrangement of words signifying—nothing.

If Professor Dwight were of those that, in common with the Addisons and Macaulays and Newmans, think it worth while to give some attention to diction, the thought conveyed in the paragraph under consideration would perhaps have been expressed somewhat in this wise :

"We have now passed in review some of the changes that, in the revision, have been made in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. It was not possible to cite them all, but a sufficient number of examples of the several classes described have been given to enable the reader to get a tolerable survey of the whole subject. Whatever may be said of the other parts of the New Testament, we think it will be generally admitted that in this epistle the changes have improved the translation. They make the English text conform more nearly to the Greek. This being true, the revisers have done <sup>scilicet</sup> a good-work ; and if it be also true with regard to all the New Testament books, the work that they have done will be a blessing to the readers of these books for the generations to come."

**Die with—from.** Man and brute die *of*, and not *with* or *from*, fevers, consumption, the plague, pneumonia, old age, and so on.

"The health officer decided that Fennel had died *from* [of] yellow fever, and accordingly the body was cremated."  
—N. Y. Sun.

**Differ.** Writers differ *from* one another in opinion with regard to the particle we should use with this verb. Some say they differ *with*, others that they differ *from*, their neighbors in opinion. The weight of authority is on the side of always using *from*, though A may differ *with* C from D in opinion with regard, say, to the size of the fixed stars. "I differ, as to this matter, *from* Bishop Lowth."  
—Cobbett. *Different to* is heard sometimes instead of

*different from*, but it is nowhere sanctioned by good usage.

"I regret to differ *from* some of my friends in Birmingham on this difficult question."—John Bright.

**Directly.** The Britons have a way of using this word in the sense of *when, as soon as*. This is quite foreign to its true meaning, which is, immediately, at once, straight-way. They say, for example, "*Directly* he reached the city he went to his brother's."

"Directly he [the saint] was dead the Arabs sent his woolen shirt to the sovereign."—London News.

"Directly he entered," says a recent English writer, for "as soon as he entered"; "immediately N.'s arrival was heard of," for "as soon as N.'s arrival was heard of," and similar phrases, are not good English.

Dr. Hall says of its use in the sense of *as soon as*: "But, after all, it may simply anticipate on the English of the future."

**Dirt.** This word means filth, or anything that renders foul and unclean, and means nothing else. It is often improperly used for earth or loam, and sometimes even for sand or gravel. We not unfrequently hear of a *dirt* road when an unpaved road is meant.

"*Dirt*," says an English writer, "is nearly always used by Americans in cases where *earth* is the correct word. 'Matter in the wrong place' is Lord Palmerston's description of dirt, and a capital definition it is. Thus, a drop of fruit-juice in a spoon is not dirt; but spill it on your shirt-front, waistcoat, or trousers, and it *is* dirt. So, too, clay, sand, dust, or gravel, distributed over one's clothes and down one's back by the prevailing March wind, is properly called dirt; but it is casting an imputation on the wisdom of the Creator



to say that he has made our beautiful earth entirely out of *dirt*."

**Disagree.** "In your report this morning, . . . it is stated that Mr. Gladstone used the expression 'disagreed *from*,' and Mr. Disraeli that of 'disagreed *to*,' . . . and that the amendment was 'disagreed *from*.' In proposing the rejection, . . . Mr. Gladstone adopted the expression 'disagreed *with*,' which is in common use."—London Times.

"Usually followed by *with*, sometimes by *to*, rarely by *from*."—Webster.

**Discommode.** This word is rarely used; *incommode* is accounted the better form.

**Disposition.** This word is sometimes very improperly used for *disposal*. We place things at the *disposal*, not at the *disposition*, of others.

**Disremember.** This is a word vulgarly used in the sense of *forget*. It is said to be more frequently heard in the South than in the North.

**Distinguish.** This verb is sometimes improperly used for *discriminate*. We *distinguish* by means of the senses as well as of the understanding; we *discriminate* by means of the understanding only. "It is difficult, in some cases, to *distinguish between*," etc., should be, "It is difficult, in some cases, to *discriminate between*," etc. We *distinguish* one thing *from another*, and *discriminate between* two or more things.

**Divers—Diverse.** Careless speakers sometimes err in using these words. *Divers* means several, sundry, various.

"In the frame and constitution of the ecclesiastical polity there are *divers* ranks and degrees."

*Diverse* means unlike, different; as, "Opinions on the subject are very *diverse*." *Divers* is not much used.

**Dock—Wharf.** The first of these words is often improperly used for the second. Of docks there are several kinds. A *naval dock* is a place for the keeping of naval stores, timber, and materials for shipbuilding. A *dry dock* is a place where vessels are drawn out of the water for repairs. A *wet dock* is a place where vessels are kept afloat at a certain level while they are being loaded or unloaded. A *sectional dock* is a contrivance for raising vessels out of the water on a series of air-tight boxes.

A *dock*, then, is a place into which things are received; hence, a man might fall *into* a dock, but could no more fall *off* a dock than he could fall off a hole. A *wharf* is a sort of quay built by the side of the water. A similar structure built at a right angle with the shore is commonly called a *pier*. Vessels lie at *wharves* and *piers*, not at *docks*.

**Donate.** This word, which is defined as meaning to give, to contribute, is looked upon by most champions of good English as being an abomination. *Donation* is also little used by careful writers. "*Donate*," says Mr. Gould, "may be dismissed with this remark: so long as its place is occupied by *give*, *bestow*, *grant*, *present*, etc., it is not needed; and it should be unceremoniously bowed out, or thrust out, of the seat into which it has temporarily intruded."

The word is a good deal used by persons that are not careful in their speech, and it is quite possible that it will never be less used than it is now.

**Done.** This past participle is often very inelegantly, if not improperly, used thus: "He did not cry out, as some have *done*, against it," which should read, "He did not cry out, as some have, against it"—i. e., "as some *have cried out* against it."

"Done is frequently a very great offender against gram-

mar," says Cobbett. "*To do* is the *act of doing*. We see people write, 'I *did* not speak yesterday so well as I wished [to speak] to have *done*.' Now, what is meant by the writer? He means to say that he *did* not speak so well as he then *wished*, or was wishing, *to speak*. Therefore the sentence should be, 'I did not speak yesterday so well as I wished *to do* [to speak].' That is to say, 'so well as I wished to do it'; that is to say, to do or to perform *the act of speaking*.

"Take great care not to be too free in your use of the verb *to do* in any of its times or modes. It is a nice little handy word, and, like our oppressed *it*, it is made use of very often when the writer is at a *loss* for what to put down. *To do* is to *act*, and therefore it never can, in any of its parts, supply the place of a *neuter* verb. 'How do you do?' Here *do* refers to the *state*, and is essentially passive or neuter. Yet, to employ it for this purpose is very common. Dr. Blair, in his twenty-third Lecture, says: 'It is somewhat unfortunate that this number of the Spectator did not *end*, as it might have *done*, with the former beautiful period.' That is to say, *done it*. And then we ask, Done what? Not the *act of ending*, because in this case there is *no action* at all. The verb means, *to come to an end*, *to cease*, *not to go any further*. This same verb *to end* is sometimes an active verb: 'I *end* my sentence'; then the verb *to do* may supply its place; as, 'I have not ended my sentence so well as I might have *done* [ended it]'; that is, *done it*; that is, done, or performed, the *act of ending*. But the number of the Spectator was no *actor*; it was expected to *perform* nothing; it was, by the doctor, wished to have *ceased* to proceed. 'Did not *end* as it very well might have ended. . . .' This would have been correct, but the doctor wished to avoid the *repetition*, and thus he

fell into bad grammar. ‘Mr. Speaker, I do not *feel* so well satisfied as I should have *done* [felt] if the Right Honorable Gentleman had explained the matter more fully.’ To *feel* satisfied is—when the satisfaction is to arise from conviction produced by fact or reasoning—a senseless expression ; and to supply its place when it is, as in this case, a neuter verb, by *to do*, is as senseless. Done *what*? Done *the act of feeling*! ‘I do not *feel* so well satisfied as I should have *done*, or *executed*, or *performed* the *act of feeling*’! What incomprehensible words!”

**Don’t.** Everybody knows that *don’t* is a contraction of *do not*, and that *doesn’t* is a contraction of *does not*; and yet *nearly* everybody is guilty of using *don’t* when he should use *doesn’t*. “So you *don’t* go. John *doesn’t* either, I hear,” and not, “John *don’t* either, I hear.”

**Double Genitive.** An anecdote of Mr. Lincoln—an anecdote of Mr. Lincoln’s. We see at a glance that these two phrases are very different in meaning. So, also, a portrait of Brown—a portrait of Brown’s. No precise rule has ever been given to guide us in our choice between these two forms of the possessive case. Sometimes it is not material which form is employed ; where, however, it is material—and it commonly is—we must consider the thought we wish to express, and rely on our discrimination.

**Doubt but.** See BUT.

**Dramatize.** See ADAPT.

**Drank.** Imperfect of *drink*, but often incorrectly used instead of the participle, *drunk*; as, “I never have *drank* [drunk] any.” We say properly, “I have neither eaten nor *drunk* anything to-day.”

**Drawing-room.** See PARLOR.

**Dress—Gown.** Within the memory of many persons the outer garment worn by women was properly called a

*sown* by everybody, instead of being improperly called a *dress*, as it now is by nearly everybody.

**Drive.** See **RIDE**.

**Due—Owing.** These two words, though close synonyms, should not be used indiscriminately. The mistake usually made is in using *due* instead of *owing*. That is *due* that ought to be paid as a debt; that is *owing* that is the outcome of something else. "It was *owing* to his exertions that the scheme succeeded." "It was *owing* to your negligence that the accident happened." "A certain respect is *due* to men's prejudices." "This was *owing* to an indifference to the pleasures of life." "It is *due* to the public that I should tell all I know of the matter."

**Each other.** "Their great authors address themselves not to their country, but to *each other*."—Buckle. *Each other* is properly applied to two only; *one another* must be used when the number considered exceeds two. Buckle should have written *one another*, and not *each other*, unless he meant to intimate that the Germans had only two great authors, which is not probable.

**Eat.** Grammarians differ very widely with regard to the conjugation of this verb; there is no doubt, however, that from every point of view the preferable forms for the preterite and past participle are respectively *ate* and *aten*. To refined ears the other forms smack of vulgarity, although supported by good authority. "I *ate* an apple." "I have *aten* dinner." "John *ate* supper with me." "As soon as you have *aten* breakfast we will set out."

**Editorial.** The use of this adjective as a substantive is said to be an Americanism.

**Effect—Affect.** These verbs, alike as they are to the eye and to the ear, are quite unlike in meaning. *Effect* means to bring about; as, "To *effect* a reform." *Affect*

means to influence; as, "His ideas will *affect* the character of the reform." For other meanings see a dictionary.

**Effluvium.** The plural of this word is *effluvia*. It is a common error with those that have no knowledge of Latin to speak of "a disagreeable *effluvia*," which is as incorrect as it would be to talk about "a disagreeable vapors." And then, as *effluvium* means noxious exhalation, it is tautological to qualify the word with the adjective *disagreeable*. The ultrapurist would avoid using the word at all.

**Effort without Effect.** "Some writers deal in expletives to a degree that tires the ear and offends the understanding. With them everything is *excessively*, or *immensely*, or *extremely*, or *vastly*, or *surprisingly*, or *wonderfully*, or *abundantly*, or the like." The notion of such writers is that these words give *strength* to what they are saying. This is a great error. Strength must be found in the *thought*, or it will never be found in the *words*. Big-sounding words, without thoughts corresponding, are effort without effect." —William Cobbett. See FORCIBLE-FEEBLE.

**Either.** This word means, strictly, the *one* or the *other* of two. Unlike *both*, which means two taken collectively, *either*, like *each*, may mean *two considered separately*; but in this sense *each* is the better word to use. "Give me *either* of them" means, give me the one or the other of two. "He has a farm on *either* side of the river" would mean that he has two farms, one on each (or either) side of the river. "He has a farm on *both* sides of the river" would mean that his farm lies partly on the one side of the river and partly on the other. The use of *either* in the sense of *each*, though biblical and defensible, may be accounted little if any better than an affectation. "There is a window at *either* end of the room." No; there is a window at *each* end of the room.

*Neither* is the negative of *either*. *Either* is responded to by *or*, *neither* by *nor*; as, "*either* this *or* that," "*neither* this *nor* that." *Either* and *neither* should not, strictly, be used in relation to more than two objects. But though both *either* and *neither* are strictly applicable to two only, they have been for a very long time used in relation to more than two by many good writers; and as it is often convenient so to use them, it seems probable that the custom will prevail. When more than two things are referred to, *any* and *none* should be used, instead of *either* and *neither*; as, "*any* of the three," not "*either* of the three"; "*no one* of the four," not "*neither* of the four."

"By the almost universal consent [correctly, *in* the almost universal *opinion*] of grammarians," says Dr. Hodgson, "*either*, as a distributive adjective, always retains the notion [idea] of duality; *any one*, therefore, should take its place in the following sentences:

" 'I should think myself happy if I could be admitted into your service as house steward, clerk, butler, or bailiff, for *either* of which places I think myself well qualified.'

" 'There have been *three* famous talkers in Great Britain, *either* of whom would illustrate what I say about dogmatists.'

"Concerning the usage [use] of *either* and *neither* as conjunctions," says Hodgson, "it seems to be generally conceded that these words, although originally contemplating no more than duality, may be freely extended to any number of objects, as in:

" 'As for Baynard, *neither* his own good sense, *nor* the dread of indigence, *nor* the consideration of his children, has been of force sufficient to stimulate him,' " etc.

On the use of *either* instead of *each*, a correspondent

of the Birmingham Daily Press, in a letter quoted by Dr Hodgson, says :

" *Either* refers to one of two things ; *each* to two things, taken severally. *One* chair I may place on *either* side of the table I please. If I have *two* chairs, I may place one on *each* side of the table. Yet we continually see such phrases as, '*either* side of the street was lined with police' ; '*on either* side of the throne was a chair of state' ; '*on either* side of her Majesty stood,' etc. Surely in all these cases the word *each* should be used, and not *either*."

**Either alternative.** The word *alternative* means a choice offered between two things. An *alternative writ*, for example, offers the *alternative* of choosing between the doing of a specified act or of showing cause why it is not done. Such propositions, therefore, as, "You are at liberty to choose *either* alternative," "*Two* alternatives are presented to me," "*Several* alternatives presented themselves," and the like, are not correct English. The word is correctly used thus :

"I am confronted with a hard *alternative* : I must either denounce a friend or betray my trust."

"I was driven to the *alternative* of either surrendering the Union, and with it the Constitution, or of laying strong hands upon the colored element."—Lincoln.

"It was a fearful *alternative* which [that] was presented before them. There was starvation on the one hand, and the union, with all its miseries, on the other. They fled, as Nature dictated to them, from the one, and consented to take refuge in the other."—John Bright. See ALTERNATIVE.

**Elder.** See OLDER.

**Electricute.** Professor March says that this is the correct form for this word.



**Elegant.** Professor Proctor says: "If you say to an American, 'This is a fine morning,' he is likely to reply, 'It is an *elegant* morning,' or perhaps oftener by using simply the word *elegant*. This is not a pleasing use of the word." This is not American English, professor, but pop-injay English. In fact, careful speakers in America use the word *elegant* but rarely.

**Eliminate.** This word, which means *to put out, to exclude*, is sometimes erroneously used in the sense of *elicit, attain, elucidate, separate, rid, elaborate, distinguish, alienate*, and so on.

"Mr. Horsman's 'first proposal is to *eliminate* the bishops.' If ever any one skilled in the [use of the] English language is destined to die of a word in philologic pain, that dreadful word *eliminate* will be the death of some of us. If Mr. Horsman meant to say that he wanted to banish, to get rid of, to expel the bishops, why didn't he say so? He does not want to *eliminate* them, but to *turn them out*; and to turn them out is easier to understand than to eliminate."—Saturday Review.

Here are some examples of the correct use of *eliminate*:

"Culture, in [omit] so far as it affects the relation of the mind to the objects of thought, may be said to consist in the continual *elimination* of the accidental from the necessary."

"The preparatory step of the discussion was an *elimination* of these less precise and [less] appropriate significations, which, as they could at best only afford [afford only] a remote genus and difference, were wholly incompetent for the purpose of a definition."

"*Eliminating* the cases of insanity and sudden passion, we find an immense mass [a great number] of deliberate suicides."

"The salts and compounds of urea are *eliminated* by other surfaces than those of the kidneys."

"Of course, what I blamed is wholly *eliminated* [i. e., thrown out]."

"M. Comte's subjective synthesis consists only in *eliminating* from the sciences everything that he deems worthless."

Here are some examples of the incorrect use of *eliminate*:

"Miss Brontë found it needful to *eliminate* [keep out or exclude] the supernatural, though she once or twice *admits* the preternatural in her pictures." Dr. Hodgson cites this, in his *Errors in the Use of English* (English edition), as an example of the correct use of the word.

"Results which [that] hardly any one could have clearly anticipated [foreseen], and yet in which, when once *eliminated* [obtained?], no thinker can hesitate to acquiesce." Acquiesce in results !! Worse writing than this is rarely met with, yet the sentence is from the *Quarterly Review*.

"To *eliminate* [separate] the real effect of art from the effects of the abuse with which it was associated."—Ruskin.

"All we can do is to select the salient points of the work and present them in such juxtaposition and contrast as may seem to be best adapted to the *elimination* [elucidation] of their significance."

"Never before was [had there been] so much genuine poetry *eliminated* by such a process of gradual accumulation and repeated touches." What this means tell who can.

"His mission was to *eliminate* [rid, purge] religion of all such kindred rubbish."

"It also looks to the final *elimination* [separation] of the soul from the body."

"By such controversies truth is often *eliminated* [elicited]."

"Whenever she spoke I involuntarily listened, for I felt sure that if it were [was] on a moral subject some foundation would be cleared ; if it were [was] intellectual, some new light would be *eliminated*" [thrown on it?]. One of the worst of bad sentences. It is so bad that it can be mended only by rewriting it: Whenever she spoke I involuntarily listened, for if it was a moral subject, I felt sure that some foundation would be cleared ; if an intellectual, that some light would be *thrown on it*.

**Ellipsis.** The omission of a word, or of words, necessary to complete the grammatical construction, but not necessary to make the meaning clear, is called an *ellipsis*. We almost always, whether in speaking or in writing, leave out some of the words necessary to the *full* expression of our meaning. For example, in dating a letter to-day, we should write, "New York, August 25, 1881," which would be, if fully written out, "I am now writing in the city of New York ; this is the twenty-fifth day of August, and this month is in the one thousand eight hundred and eighty-first year of the Christian era." "I am going to Wallack's" means. "I am going to Wallack's *theater*." "I shall spend the summer at my aunt's"; i. e., at my aunt's *house*.

By supplying the *ellipses* we can often discover the errors in a sentence, if there are any.

**Else.** Followed by *than*, and not by *but*. "It is nothing else *than* greed." The word is sometimes redundant ; as, "No one *else* but me."

**Embody.** This is a word that some writers make

great use of, and frequently misuse. Here is an example of its misuse:

"The plays that the author has *embodied* in this well-printed and illustrated book are those most likely to interest the young." If we retain the construction, the best way, perhaps, to mend the sentence is this: The plays that the author has *given place to* in this, etc.

**Emigrant—Immigrant.** These words are not infrequently confounded. Persons going out of a country are *emigrants*; persons coming into a country are *immigrants*. The New York Commissioners of *Emigration* are properly Commissioners of *Immigration*.

**Encounter.** Nowadays this word is commonly used in the sense of to meet in a hostile manner, to attack, to engage with, to contend against. "When knight-errantry was in vogue *encounters* were perpetually [continually] taking place between the knights, which were sometimes fierce and bloody. Shakespeare sometimes uses the word in the sense of *meet*, thus: "See, they *encounter* thee with their hearts' thanks." In this sense the word is used, or rather misused, by an occasional writer now. Here is an example:

"But when in her presence, he saw her only as one of the most charming of her sex that it had ever been his good fortune to *encounter*."—Hammond.

**Ending of sentences.** It is a great, a very great, mistake to think a sentence should never end with a preposition. Sentences ending with prepositions are always more terse, always quite as idiomatic, and always simpler, than they would be if differently constructed.

"The man I gave it to," not "The man to whom I gave it." "The verb it belongs to," not "The verb to

which it belongs." "The house we live in," not "The house in which we live."

**Enjoy bad health.** As no one has ever been known to *enjoy* bad health, it is better to employ some other form of expression than this. Say, for example, he is in *feeble*, or *delicate*, health.

**Enquire.** This word and its derivatives are now commonly written *in* instead of *en*. *In* conforms to the Latin; *en* to the French.

**Enthuse.** This is a word that is occasionally heard in conversation, and is sometimes met with in print, but it has not as yet made its appearance in the dictionaries. What its ultimate fate will be, of course no one can tell; for the present, however, it is studiously shunned by those that are at all careful in selecting their words. It is said to be most used in the South. The writer has never seen it anywhere in the North but in the columns of the Boston Congregationalist. The Standard Dictionary (1895) has the word, but says it is slang.

**Epigram.** "The word *epigram* signified originally an inscription on a monument. It next came to mean a short poem containing some single thought pointedly expressed, the subjects being very various—amatory, convivial, moral, eulogistic, satirical, humorous, etc. Of the various devices for brevity and point employed in such compositions, especially in modern times, the most frequent is a play upon words. . . . In the *epigram* the mind is roused by a conflict or contradiction between the form of the language and the meaning really conveyed." —Bain.

Some examples are .

"When you have nothing to say, say it."

"We can not see the wood for the trees"; that is, we

can not get a general view because we are so engrossed with the details.

"Verbosity is cured by a large vocabulary"; that is, he that commands a large vocabulary is able to select words that will give his meaning tersely.

"By indignities men come to dignities."

"Some people are too foolish to commit follies."

"He went to his imagination for his facts, and to his memory for his tropes."

"He that hath no dram of folly in his composition we may be very sure hath many pounds of much worse matter."

He spent his life trying to shoot big bullets from a small-bored gun.

It is dangerous to write when one has nothing to say.

There is but one thing in this world that is much lauded and applauded—reputation.

To see much, one must know much.

**Epithet.** Many persons use this word who are in error with regard to its meaning; they think that to "apply epithets" to a person is to vilify and insult him. Not at all. An *epithet* is a word that expresses a quality, good or bad; a term that expresses an attribute.

Every adjective is an *epithet*, but every epithet is not an adjective. *Epithet* is a technical term of the rhetorician; *adjective*, a technical term of the grammarian. In prose, the epithet is often put after the noun, as, Napoleon *the Great*, Washington, *the Father of his Country*, John *the Baptist*, etc. A man's style depends much on his choice of epithets; those that use them sparingly, as a rule, are the better writers.

**Equally as well.** A redundant form of expression, as any one will see who for a moment considers it. *As well,*

or *equally well*, expresses quite as much as *equally as well*.

“The Plumed Knight’s letter will contain about six thousand words. Perhaps two words would have done *equally as well*—simply ‘I accept.’” The *as* or the *equally* should have been omitted.

**Equanimity of mind.** This phrase is tautological, and expresses no more than does *equanimity* (literally, “equal-mindedness”) alone; hence, *of mind* is superfluous, and consequently inelegant. *Anxiety of mind* is a scarcely less redundant form of expression. *A capricious mind* is in the same category.

**Erratum.** Plural, *errata*.

**Esquire.** An esquire was originally the shield-bearer of a knight. It is much, and, in the opinion of some, rather absurdly, used in this country. Mr. Richard Grant White says on the subject of its use: “I have yet to discover what a man means when he addresses a letter to John Dash, *Esqr.* He means no more nor less than when he writes *Mr.* (master). The use of *Esq.* is quite as prevalent in England as in America, and has little more meaning there than here. It simply belongs to our stock of courteous epithets.

**Et cetera.** “&c., &c. is very frequently read ‘and so forth, and so forth’; and, what is worse, many people who read it properly, *et cetera*, regard it and use it as a more elegant equivalent of ‘and so forth’; but it is no such thing. *Et cetera* is merely Latin for *and the rest*, and is properly used in schedules or statements after an account given of particular things, to include other things too unimportant and too numerous for particular mention. But the phrase *and so forth* has quite another meaning—i e., and as before, so after, in the same strain. It implies the

continuation of a story in accordance with the beginning.”—Richard Grant White.

**Euphemism.** A description that describes in inoffensive language that that is of itself offensive, or a figure that uses agreeable phraseology when the literal would be offensive, is called a *euphemism*.

**Everlastingly.** This adverb is misused in the South in a manner that is very apt to excite the risibility of one to whom the peculiar misuse is new. The writer once visited the upper part of New York with a distinguished Southern poet and journalist. It was the gentleman's first ride over an elevated railway. When we were fairly under way, in admiration of the rate of speed at which the cars were moving, he exclaimed, “Well, they do just *everlastingly* shoot along!—don't they?”

**Every.** This word, which means simply each or all taken separately, is of late years frequently made by slipshod speakers to do duty for perfect, entire, great, or all possible. Thus we have such expressions as *every* pains, *every* confidence, *every* praise, *every* charity, and so on. We also have such diction as, “*Every one* has this in common”; meaning, *all of us* have this in common.

**Every-day Latin.** *A fortiori*: with stronger reason. *A posteriori*: from the effect to the cause. *A priori*: from the cause to the effect. *Bona fide*: in good faith; in reality. *Certiorari*: to be made more certain. *Ceteris paribus*: other circumstances being equal. *De facto*: in fact; in reality. *De jure*: in right; in law. *Ecce homo*: behold the man. *Ergo*: therefore. *Et cetera*: and the rest; and so on. *Excerpta*: extracts. *Exempli gratia*: by way of example; abbreviated, *e. g.* and *ex. gr.* *Ex officio*: by virtue of his office. *Ex parte*: on one side; an *ex parte* statement is a statement on one side only. *Ibidem*: in the



same place ; abbreviated, *ibid.* *Idem* : the same. *Id est* : that is ; abbreviated, *i. e.* *Imprimis* : in the first place. *In statu quo* : in the former state ; just as it was. *In statu quo ante bellum* : in the same state as before the war. *In transitu* : in passing. *Index expurgatorius* : an expurgated index. *In extremis* : at the point of death. *In memoriam* : in memory. *Ipse dixit* : on his sole assertion. *Item* : also. *Labor omnia vincit* : labor overcomes every difficulty. *Locus sigilli* : the place of the seal. *Multum in parvo* : much in little. *Mutatis mutandis* : after making the necessary changes. *Ne plus ultra* : nothing beyond ; the utmost point. *Nolens volens* : willing or unwilling. *Nota bene* : mark well ; take particular notice. *Omnes* : all. *O tempora, O mores!* O the times and the manners! *Otium cum dignitate* : ease with dignity. *Otium sine dignitate* : ease without dignity. *Particeps criminis* : an accomplice. *Peccavi* : I have sinned. *Per se* : by itself. *Prima facie* : on the first view or appearance ; at first sight. *Pro bono publico* : for the public good. *Quid nunc* : what now? *Quid pro quo* : one thing for another ; an equivalent. *Quondam* : formerly. *Rara avis* : a rare bird ; a prodigy. *Resurgam* : I shall rise again. *Seriatim* : in order. *Sine die* : without specifying any particular day ; to an indefinite time. *Sine qua non* : an indispensable condition. *Sui generis* : of its own kind. *Vade mecum* : go with me. *Verbatim* : word by word. *Versus* : against. *Vale* : farewell. *Via* : by the way of. *Vice* : in the place of. *Vide* : see. *Vi et armis* : by main force. *Viva voce* : orally ; by word of mouth. *Vox populi, vox Dei* : the voice of the people is the voice of God—which is very far from being true.

**Evidence—Testimony.** These words, though differing widely in meaning, are often used indiscriminately by

careless speakers. *Evidence* is that that *tends* to convince ; *testimony* is that that is *intended* to convince. In a judicial investigation, for example, there might be a great deal of *testimony*—a great deal of *testifying*—and very little *evidence* ; and the *evidence* might be quite the reverse of the *testimony*. See PROOF.

**Exaggeration.** “Weak minds and feeble writers and speakers delight in *superlatives*.” See EFFORT WITHOUT EFFECT.

**Except.** Sometimes misused for *unless*, and occasionally for *but*.

“No one need apply *except* [unless] he is thoroughly familiar with the business.”

“The shocking discovery has been made that the wreck of the Daniel Steinmann, and the consequent loss of over a hundred lives, would probably have been prevented *except* [but] for government red tape.”

“The young lady is never allowed to ride *or* drive alone with a gentleman ; neither is she allowed to walk *upon* [in] the street, visit any friend, nor to attend a public ball, *except* [unless] she is accompanied by some member of the family or [by] a trusted lady friend.”—Corr. Inter-Ocean.

“It has no literary merit, *except* [unless] the total absence of all pretension may pass for one.” See UNLESS.

**Excessively.** That class of persons that are never content with any form of expression that falls short of the superlative, frequently use *excessively* when *exceedingly*, or even the little word *very*, would serve their turn better. They say, for example, that the weather is *excessively hot*, when they should content themselves with saying simply that the weather is *very warm*, or, if the word suits them better, *hot*.

Intemperance in the use of language is as much to be

censured as intemperance in anything else ; like intemperance in other things, its effect is vulgarizing.

"The Princess Isabella, as well as her French husband, Comte d'Eu, used to be *excessively* [exceedingly] unpopular."—N. Y. Sun.

**Excise laws.** A good deal is heard about our *excise* laws, yet New York has no excise laws. Our excise laws, so called, are properly *license* laws.

An *excise* is a tax levied on domestic products ; it is an internal revenue tax. The tax, for example, that the Federal Government levies on whisky and cigars is an *excise* tax.

New York has *license* laws and *license* commissioners, and properly they should be so called. Tax-collecting and license-granting are very different duties.

"No license for Macy's. The *Excise* Board says liquor can't [sha'n't] be sold there."—N. Y. Sun. Properly, the *License* Board.

**Execute.** This word means, to follow out to the end, to carry into effect, to accomplish, to fulfill, to perform ; as, to execute an order, to execute a purpose. And the dictionaries and almost universal usage say that it also means, to put to death in conformity with a judicial sentence ; as, to execute a criminal. Some careful speakers, however, maintain that the use of the word in this sense is indefensible. They say that *laws* and *sentences* are executed, but not *criminals*, and that their execution only rarely results in the death of the persons upon whom they are executed. In the hanging of a criminal, it is, then, not the criminal that is executed, but the law and the sentence. The criminal is *hanged*.

**Expect.** This verb always has reference to what is to come, never to what is past. We can not *expect* back-

ward. Instead, therefore, of saying, "I *expect* you thought I would come to see you yesterday," we should say, "I *suppose*," etc.

Also sometimes incorrectly used for *suspect*. "I *expect* you know all about it." As, "I *suspect* you know," etc.

**Experience.** "We *experience* great difficulty in getting him to take his medicine." The word *have* should be big enough, in a sentence like this, for anybody. "We *experienced* great hardships." Better, "We *suffered*."

**Experiment.** See TRY.

**Explode.** "All our present uses of *explode*, whether literal or figurative, have reference to bursting, and to bursting with noise ; and it is for the most part forgotten, I should imagine, that these are all secondary and derived ; that *to explode*, originally an active verb, means, to drive off the stage with loud clapping of the hands ; and that when one of our early writers speaks of an *exploded* heresy or an *exploded* opinion, his image is not drawn from something which [that], having burst, has perished so ; but he would imply that it has been contemptuously driven off from the world's stage."—Trench.

**Extend.** This verb, the primary meaning of which is to stretch out, is used, especially by lovers of big words, in connections where to give, to show, or to offer would be preferable. For example, it is certainly better to say, "They *showed* me every courtesy," than "They *extended* every courtesy to me." See EVERY.

**Fall.** The use of this word, in the sense of *autumn*, is rare in Great Britain, and is there regarded as provincial. It is good old English nevertheless.

**False Grammar.** Some examples of false grammar will show what every one is the better for knowing: that, in literature, nothing should be taken on trust ; that errors

of grammar, even, are found where we should least expect them. "I do not know whether the imputation *were* just or not."—Emerson. "I proceeded to inquire if the 'extract' . . . *were* a veritable quotation."—Emerson. Should be *was* in both cases. "How *sweet* the moonlight sleeps!"—Townsend, *Art of Speech*, vol. i, p. 114. Prof. Townsend cites this as a grammatically correct—though seemingly incorrect—use of the adjective. Poetic license makes such a use of the adjective permissible in verse, but it is not grammatical. It is no better grammar to say "the moonlight sleeps *sweet*," than it is to say "the baby sleeps *sweet*." "There is no question *but* these arts . . . will greatly aid him," etc.—*Ibid.*, p. 130. Should be *that*. "Nearly all who have been distinguished in literature or oratory have made . . . the generous confession that their attainments *have been* reached through patient and laborious industry. They have declared that speaking and writing, though once difficult for them, *have become* well-nigh recreations."—*Ibid.*, p. 143. The *have been* should be *were*, and the *have become* should be *became*. "Many pronominal adverbs are correlatives of *each other*."—Harkness's *New Latin Grammar*, p. 147. Should be *one another*. "How much better for you as seller and the nation as buyer . . . than to sink . . . in cutting *one another's* throats." Should be *each other's*.

"A minister noted for prolixity of style was once preaching before the inmates of a lunatic asylum. In one of his illustrations he painted a scene of a man condemned to be hung, but reprieved under the gallows." These two sentences are so faulty that the only way to mend them is to rewrite them. They are from a work that professes to teach the "art of speech." Mended: "A minister noted for his prolixity once *preached* before the inmates of a

lunatic asylum. By way of illustration, he painted a scene in which a man, *who had been* condemned to be *hanged*, *was* reprieved under the gallows."

" 'I never *saw* [have seen] you looking in better health,' remarked a Journal reporter."

"Further, I never [have] made a loan *or pledged* [nor have I pledged] any of these stocks. I never [have] bought stocks on a margin, or [nor have I] pledged bonds or stocks in payment. I have always bought for investment—not speculation."

"The late Mr. Fountaine . . . *was said to have been* [was said to be, or, is said to have been] a deadly foe to foxes, and it is averred [said] that his keepers made them scarce," etc.—Vanity Fair.

"In consequence of the inquiry into the conspiracy at Warsaw, it has been arranged that the Czar will [shall] arrive at Fortress Modlin, outside of Warsaw."

"The climate of Pau is perhaps *the most* [more] genial, and *the best* [better] suited to invalids [than that] of any other spot in France."

"The giving [of] the bride away is also criticised."—N. Y. Sun.

"All persons are *forbid* [forbidden] *walking* [to walk] or *driving* [to drive] through this tunnel."—Fourth Avenue Railroad.

"If there ever *were* [has been] a case for a peaceful settlement of an international dispute, the Venezuelan-Guiana case is certainly one."—N. Y. Sun.

"If he *were* [was] indeed intriguing, it is not surprising that he was treated as an intriguer rather than as a consul."—N. Y. Sun.

"Raikes once asked Montrond if it *were* [was] true that," etc.—Argonaut.

"It is such an exhibition of the French art of this century as *was never seen* [never before has been seen] even in France."—N. Y. Sun.

**Family.** In Great Britain, a man of *family* is a man well connected; in America, a man of *family* is a man having a wife and children.

**Farther—Further.** "I will go no *farther*." "I have nothing *further* to say." "He lives *farther* away than I do." "We will not discuss the matter *further*."

**Female.** Often used when *woman* is the word that good taste, as well as correctness, demands. Why should woman, any more than man, be confounded with the lower animals of the same sex? The following are examples of the incorrect use of the word:

"He did not bid him go and sell himself to the first *female* he could find possessed of wealth."

"With the repugnance not unnatural to a *female*," etc.

**Fetch.** See BRING.

**Fewer.** See LESS.

**Final Completion.** If there were such a thing as a plurality or a series of completions, there would, of course, be such a thing as the *final* completion; but as every completion is final, to talk about a *final completion* is as absurd as it would be to talk about a *final finality*.

**Financial.** Often, very often, used when the proper word is *pecuniary*, *monetary*, or *money*.

"Instead of the burden of *financial* [pecuniary] obligations being from him to Woolston, the fact is quite the reverse."—A New York Daily.

*Financial* is used properly of the public funds or revenues of a state, and of the governmental system of raising and disbursing the same. *Pecuniary* or *monetary* has reference to individual enterprises, and of the *money* relations

we may have with one another. For instance, we say the *financial* system of Great Britain ; the affair or undertaking was a *pecuniary* success ; the *monetary* or *money* relations between the two firms.

"The difference between the value of the services of a sober man and of a sot illustrates the *financial* [money or pecuniary] loss to the State from the liquor traffic."

"She said he had given them no *financial* [pecuniary] assistance for several weeks."

"To charge or burden with *financial* [pecuniary] obligations."

"Buffalo's meeting likely to result in a heavy *financial* [pecuniary] loss."—N. Y. Sun.

**Find.** Often very incorrectly used in the sense of *supply* or *furnish* ; thus, "I thought the corporation *found* everything."

**Fire.** This verb is much and very vulgarly used of late years in conversation, and sometimes in the newspapers, for *to throw* ; thus,

"She saw John Trainor, a boy, in the act of *firing* [throwing] another potato."

"You all know of that philosopher who taught that everything was [is] unreal and a dream, and when a stone was *fired* [thrown] at him dodged the missile." Vulgar, very, though it is sanctioned by the learned and eloquent Monsignor Capel. See San Francisco Chronicle, June 26, 1885 :

"**FIRE.** When hand firearms came into use, and very slowly superseded the bow, the musketeer carried a lighted match, and the word of command was, 'Give *fire* !'—that is, put fire to the powder. This was soon naturally abbreviated to '*fire*.' Hence *fire* came to be used, pardonably as to arms, for *shoot*."



**First.** We say, properly, the *first two*, the *first three*, etc., as in the same series there can be but one *first* and one *last*; hence *two first* is incorrect.

The *two first*, however, is quite correct when each of the two meant is at the head of a series.

First is sometimes used superfluously: as, "You must *first* be a member before you can attend."

**Firstly.** George Washington Moon says in defense of *firstly*: "I do not object to the occasional use of *first* as an adverb; but in sentences where it would be followed by *secondly*, *thirdly*, etc., I think that the adverbial form is preferable." To this, one of Mr. Moon's critics replies: "However desirable it may be to employ the word *firstly* on certain occasions, the fact remains that the employment [employing, or, better, to employ] of it on any occasion is not the best usage." Webster inserts *firstly*, but remarks, "Improperly used for *first*."

*Firstly*, when followed by *secondly*, *thirdly*, etc., is certainly more euphonious.

**First-rate.** There are people that object to this phrase, and yet it is well enough when properly placed, as it is, for example, in such a sentence as this: "He's a 'first-class' fellow, and I like him *first-rate*. If I didn't, 'you bet' I'd just give him 'hail Columbia' for 'blowing' the thing all round town like the dizzy chump that he is."

**Fix.** Improperly used in the sense of *arrange*; as, "I must *fix* the furniture." "Who *fixed* the books on these shelves?" Vulgarly used thus: "I will *fix* him." "The jury was *fixed*." "You must *fix up*, if you go." "Your affairs are in a bad *fix* [condition]."

"*Fix* may be safely called the American word of words, since there is probably no action whatever, performed by mind or body, which [that] is not represented at some

time or other by this universal term. It has well been called the strongest evidence of that natural indolence which [that] avoids the trouble of careful thought at all hazards, and [of] that restless hurry which [that] ever makes the word welcome that comes up first and saves time. Whatever is to be made, whatever needs repair, whatever requires arrangement—all is *fixed*. The farmer *fixes* his gates, the mechanic his work-bench, the seamstress her sewing machine, the fine lady her hair, and the school-boy his rules. At a public meeting, it is *fixed* who are to be the candidates for office, rules are *fixed* to govern an institution, and when all arrangements have been made the people contentedly say: Now everything is nicely *fixed*."

**Flee—Fly.** These verbs, though near of kin, are not interchangeable. For example, we can not say, "He *flew* the city," "He *flew* from his enemies," "He *flew* at the approach of danger," *flew* being the imperfect tense of *to fly*, which is properly used to express the actions of birds on the wing, of kites, arrows, etc. The imperfect tense of *to flee* is *fled*; hence, "He *fled* the city," "He *fled* from his enemies," "We *fled* at the approach of danger," etc.

**Flock.** Distinctions in the use of collective nouns have been thus pointed out:

A flock of girls is called a bevy; a bevy of wolves a pack; a pack of thieves a gang; a gang of angels a host; a host of porpoises a shoal; a shoal of buffalo a herd; a herd of children a troop; a troop of partridges a covey; a covey of beauties a galaxy; a galaxy of ruffians a horde; a horde of rubbish a heap; a heap of oxen a drove; a drove of blackguards a mob; a mob of whales a school; a school of worshippers a congregation; a congregation of engineers a

corps; a corps of robbers a band; a band of locusts a swarm; a swarm of people a crowd.

**Fly.** "Why did the *fly* Texan, after handling the money and seeing it put into the bag, draw his pistol on the New York swindler as he was pushing the bag toward the panel?"—Ed. N. Y. Sun.

I don't know what *fly* means in the sentence above, but I suspect that it's slang.

**Forcible-feeble.** This is a "novicy" kind of diction in which the would-be forcible writer defeats his object by the overuse of expletives.

Examples: "And yet the *great* centralization of wealth is one of the [great] evils of the day. All that Mr. —— utters [says] upon this point is *forcible and* just. This centralization is due to the *enormous* reproductive power of capital, to the *immense* advantage that *costly and complicated* machinery gives to *great* [large] establishments, and to the *marked* difference of personal force among men." The first *great* is misplaced; the word *utters* is misused; the second *great* is ill-chosen. The other words in italics only enfeeble the sentence.

Again: "In countries where *immense* [large] estates exist, a breaking up of these *vast* demesnes into *many* minor freeholds would no doubt be a [of] *very* great advantage." Substitute *large* for *immense*, and take out *vast*, *many*, and *very*, and the language becomes much more forcible.

Again: "The *very* first effect of the —— taxation plan would be destructive to the interests of this *great multitude* [class]; it would impoverish our *innumerable* farmers, *it would* confiscate the earnings of [our] *industrious* tradesmen and artisans, *it would* [and] paralyze the hopes of *struggling* millions." What a waste of

portly expletives is here! With them the sentence is high-flown and weak; take them out and introduce the words inclosed in brackets, and it becomes simple and forcible.

**Former and latter.** The less a writer uses these words the better. In the interest of force and clearness their use should be studiously avoided. It is nearly always better to repeat the noun.

"The Suabian cities . . . now made another attempt to protect themselves against the encroachments of the reigning princes upon their rights. For two years a fierce war waged between *them* [the cities] and *the latter* [the princes], who were headed," etc.—Bayard Taylor. In this sentence it is also better not to use *them*, but to repeat the noun. In using pronouns one can not be too sparing.

"In this treaty the emperor . . . infamously gave his allies to Charles the Bold's revenge. *The latter* [Charles] instantly seized," etc.

"In case of disagreement between the President and any member of the cabinet, has the *former* [President] the power of removal of [to remove] such officer?"

"The gentleman was waiting to shoot tigers as they came to drink at a lake skirted by a jungle, when about midnight a deer emerged from the *latter* [jungle] and went to the water's edge."

"Thus Texas, with a population of 2,650,000, would have to pay more than Massachusetts, with a population of 2,472,000, though *the latter State* [Massachusetts] has more than three times the wealth of *the former* [Texas]."

"Li Hung Chang's degradation may mean much, and it may mean nothing; it is more than probable that it *is the latter* [means nothing]."

"Such was Bonaparte's first interview with Barras. Subsequently *the latter* [Barras], finding himself," etc.

"This physical double of Bonaparte was Marat. I had seen a good deal of *the latter* [Marat] on the benches," etc.

The reader usually has to go back, if he would be sure which is *former* and which *latter*.

"Griffin paid no attention to Buttz. At the corner of Park and State Streets *the latter* [Buttz] drew a revolver," etc.

"During the altercation between the moderator and the accused, the *former* [moderator] declared Mr. Blank suspended, whereupon *the latter* [Mr. Blank] rose and said: 'You have,' " etc.

**Forward.** This word, like *upward*, *downward*, *to-ward*, and other compounds of *ward*, is often written with a final *s*, yet the *s* is generally considered a superfluity.

**Frequently.** See GENERALLY.

**Friend—Acquaintance.** Some philosopher has said that he that has half a dozen friends in the course of his life may deem himself fortunate; and yet, to judge from many people's talk, one would suppose they had friends by the score. No man knows whether he has any friends or not until he has "their adoption tried"; hence, he that is desirous to call things by their right names will, as a rule, use the word *acquaintance* instead of *friend*. "Your friend" is a favorite and very objectionable way many people, especially young people, have of writing themselves at the end of their letters. In this way the obscure stripling protests himself the FRIEND of the first man in the land, and that, too, when he is, perhaps, a comparative stranger and asking a favor.

**Future.** Sometimes strangely misused for *thereafter*, *after*, *afterward*, *subsequent*, thus :

"His *future* [subsequent] career is involved in mystery."

"Early the following year they bought a place in the country, where they resided [lived] a good deal *for the future* [afterward]."

"It was a triumph, and *for the future* [thereafter] Maurice *found* his men more easily managed."

"Many a time *in the future* [afterward, or subsequently] when the story *was* told," etc.

"Her *future* [after] life *was*," etc.

"At a *future* [subsequent] meeting Sir David *was* served with an indictment."

"Upon all *future* [subsequent] occasions the Queen *was* very affable."

"And what *was* the *future* [subsequent] career of these two?"

*Future* can not properly be used with a past tense, except where the statement has the effect of an indirect quotation ; as, "He said his whole *future* career depended on his yielding."

**Gender.** When *nobody*, *no one*, *no person*, *not any one*, *one*, or *not anybody* is the antecedent—i. e., when the antecedent may be of either sex—the masculine pronoun should always be used.

"*Nobody* [else] ever [has] put so much of themselves [himself] into their [his] work."—Leslie Stephen on Charlotte Brontë.

"There was something indignant in her manner, like *one* who felt *herself* [himself] under the mortifying necessity of conforming to the will of others." The *felt* should be *feels*.

**Generally.** Here is a word that is very frequently used

when the proper word would be one of its synonyms—usually, frequently, or commonly. I quote from Crabb :

“What is *commonly* done is an action common to all ; what is *generally* done is the action of the greatest part ; what is *frequently* done is either the action of many, or an action many times repeated by the same person ; what is *usually* done is done regularly by one or by many. *Commonly* is opposed to rarely ; *generally* and *frequently* to occasionally or seldom ; *usually* to casually. Men *commonly* judge of others by themselves ; those who judge by the mere exterior are *generally* deceived ; but notwithstanding every precaution, one is *frequently* exposed to gross frauds ; a man of business *usually* repairs to his counting-house every day at a certain hour.”

There is always a best word to use ; but one can not always find that best word, try as one may.

**Gentleman.** Few things are in worse taste than to use the term *gentleman*, whether in the singular or the plural, to designate the sex. “If I was a *gentleman*,” says Miss Snooks. “*Gentlemen* have just as much curiosity as *ladies*,” says Mrs. Jenkins. “*Gentlemen* have so much more liberty than we *ladies* have,” says Mrs. Parvenue. Now, if these ladies were ladies, they would in each of these cases use the word *man* instead of *gentleman*, and *woman* instead of *lady*. Further, Miss Snooks would say, “If I *were*.” Well-bred men, men of culture and refinement—gentlemen, in short—use the terms *lady* and *gentleman* comparatively little, and they are especially careful not to call themselves *gentlemen* when they can avoid it. A gentleman, for example, does not say, “I, with some *other* gentlemen, went,” etc. ; he is careful to leave out the word *other*. The men that use these terms most, and especially those that lose no opportunity to proclaim themselves *gentlemen*, belong to that class

of men that cock their hats on one side of their heads, and often wear them when and where gentlemen would remove them; that pride themselves on their familiarity with the latest slang; that proclaim their independence by showing the least possible consideration for others; that laugh long and loud at their own wit; that wear a profusion of cheap finery, such as outlandish watch chains hooked in the lowest button-hole of their waistcoats, Brazilian diamonds in their shirt bosoms, and big seal rings on their little fingers; that use bad grammar and interlard their conversation with big oaths. In business correspondence, Smith is addressed as *Sir*, while Smith & Brown are often addressed as *Gentlemen*—or, vulgarly, as *Gents*. It is better to address them as *Sirs*.

Since writing the foregoing, I have met with the following paragraph in the London publication, *All the Year Round*: "Socially, the term 'gentleman' has become almost vulgar. It is certainly less employed by gentlemen than by inferior persons. The one speaks of 'a man I know,' the other of 'a gentleman I know.' In the one case the gentleman is taken for granted, in the other it seems to need specification. Again, as regards the term 'lady.' It is quite in accordance with the usages of society to speak of your acquaintance the duchess as 'a very nice person.' People who would say 'very nice lady' are not generally of a social class that has much to do with duchesses; and if you speak of one of these as a 'person,' you will soon be made to feel your mistake."

"In nine cases out of ten the use of *gentleman* for *man* is a case of affectation founded neither in education nor politeness."—N. Y. Sun.

**Gents.** Of all vulgarisms, this is perhaps the most offensive. If we say *gents*, why not say *lades*?



**Gerund.** “‘I have work *to do*,’ ‘there is no more *to say*,’ are phrases where the verb is not in the common infinitive, but in the form of the *gerund*. ‘He is the man *to do it*, or *for doing it*.’ ‘A house *to let*,’ ‘the course *to steer by*,’ ‘a place *to lie in*,’ ‘a thing *to be done*,’ ‘a city *to take refuge in*,’ ‘the means *to do ill deeds*,’ are adjective gerunds; they may be expanded into clauses: ‘a house that the owner lets or will let’; ‘the course that we should steer by’; ‘a thing that should be done’; ‘a city wherein one may take refuge’; ‘the means whereby ill deeds may be done.’ When the *to* ceased in the twelfth century to be a distinctive mark of the dative infinitive or gerund, *for* was introduced to make the writer’s intention clear. Hence the familiar form in ‘What went ye out *for to see*?’ ‘they came *for to show* him the temple.’”—Bain.

**Girl.** Sometimes vulgarly employed instead of daughter. A father whose permission was asked to marry “one of his girls,” answered: “Certainly. Which one will you have—the chambermaid, or the cook?”

**Good.** Sometimes improperly used instead of *well*, in forming compound adjectives with the participles fitting, shaped, and conditioned.

Things are *well*-shaped, not *good*-shaped, and garments are *well*-fitting, and not *good*-fitting.

“Her feet are said to be usually without an instep, and owe all their beauty to *well*-fitting shoes.”

**Goods.** This term, like other terms used in trade, should be restricted to the vocabulary of commerce. Messrs. Arnold & Constable, in common with the Washington Market huckster, very properly speak of their wares as their *goods*; but Mrs. Arnold and Mrs. Constable should—and I doubt not do—speak of their gowns as being made of

fine or coarse *silk, cashmere, muslin*, or whatever the material may be.

**Got.** In sentences expressing simple possession—as, “I have *got* a book,” “What has he *got* there?” “Have you *got* any news?” “They have *got* a new house,” etc.—*got* is entirely superfluous, if not, as some writers contend, absolutely incorrect. Possession is fully expressed by *have*. “Foxes have holes: the birds of the air have nests”; not, “Foxes have *got* holes; the birds of the air have *got* nests.” Formerly the imperfect tense of this verb was *gat*, which is now obsolete, and the perfect participle was *gotten*, which some grammarians say is growing obsolete. If this be true, there is no good reason for it. If we say *eaten, written, striven, forgotten*, why not say *gotten*, where this form of the participle is more euphonious—as it often is—than *got*?

“Here is a gentleman who sends his grammatical proposition from a place far off in the West :

“‘SIR : The following paragraph is clipped from The Sun of January 30th :

“‘“Some men say nothing because they have got nothing to say. Some say nothing because they feel the necessity of keeping what they have got and getting all they can.”’

“‘Is not the word “got” in each sentence not only inelegant and superfluous, but positively vulgar? A. W.

“‘HAMILTON, Mo., February 2d.’”

“Our correspondent is informed that the use of the word ‘got’ in the above extract is entirely in accordance with the most venerable and picturesque idioms of the English language. This language, he should understand, is not a machine, but a growth, and those who would

reduce it to rigorous utilitarian forms would destroy its beauty. The vulgarity in this case lies entirely in our correspondent's deluded fancy. The word to which he objects is neither inelegant nor superfluous."—N. Y. Sun, February 6, 1835.

If not "inelegant and superfluous," what purpose does the word serve? Does *have got* express more than *have*?

**Gould against Alford.** Mr. Edward S. Gould, in his review of Dean Alford's *Queen's English*, remarks, on page 131 of his *Good English*: "And now, as to the style\* of the dean's book, taken as a whole. He must be held responsible for every error in it; because, as has been shown, he has had full leisure for its revision.† The errors are nevertheless numerous, and the shortest way to exhibit them is‡ in tabular form." In several instances Mr. Gould would not have taken the dean to task had he been more guarded. The following are a few of Mr. Gould's corrections in which he is clearly in the right:

Paragraph 4. "Into *another* land *than*"; should be, "into a land *other than*."

16. "We do not follow rule in spelling other words, but custom"; should be, "We do not follow *rule*, but *custom*, in spelling," etc.

18. "The distinction is observed in French, but *never appears* to have been made," etc.; read, "*appears never* to have been made."

61. "*Rather* to aspirate more *than* less"; should be, "to aspirate more *rather than* less."

\* Mr. Gould criticises the dean's *diction*, not his *style*.

† Better, "to revise it."

‡ Is to *put them* in tabular form"; or, better, "The shortest way is to *exhibit them* in tabular form."

9. "It is said also *only* to occur three times," etc.; read, "*occur only* three times."

44. "This doubling *only takes place* in a syllable," etc.; read, "*takes place only*."

142. "Which can *only* be decided when those circumstances are known"; read, "*can be decided only* when," etc.

166. "I will *only* say that it produces," etc.; read, "I will *say only*," etc.

170. "It is said that this can *only* be filled in thus"; read, "can be *filled in only* thus."

368. "I can *only* deal with the complaint in a general way"; read, "*deal with the complaint only*," etc.

86. "*In* so far as they are idiomatic," etc. What is the use of *in*?

171. "Try the experiment"—"*tried* the experiment"; read, *make* and *made*.

345. "It is *most* generally used of that very sect," etc. Why *most*?

362. "The joining together two clauses with a third," etc.; read, "*of* two clauses," etc.

**Gown.** See DRESS.

**Graduated.** Most writers nowadays say, "I *was*, he *was*, or they *were* graduated"; and ask, "When *were* you, or *was* he, graduated?" "He *was graduated* at Princeton." "He *was graduated* at Harvard in 1850."—Standard Dictionary.

**Grammatical Errors.** "The correctness of the expression *grammatical errors* has been disputed. 'How,' it has been asked, 'can an error be grammatical?' How, it may be replied, can we with propriety say, *grammatically incorrect*? Yet we can do so.

"No one will question the propriety of saying *grammatically correct*. Yet the expression is the acknowledged

ment of things *grammatically incorrect*. Likewise the phrase *grammatical correctness* implies the existence of *grammatical incorrectness*. If, then, a sentence is *grammatically incorrect*, or, what is the same thing, has *grammatical incorrectness*, it includes a GRAMMATICAL ERROR. *Grammatically incorrect* signifies INCORRECT WITH RELATION TO THE RULES OF GRAMMAR. *Grammatical errors* signifies ERRORS WITH RELATION TO THE RULES OF GRAMMAR.

"They who ridicule the phrase *grammatical errors*, and substitute the phrase *errors in grammar*, make an egregious mistake. Can there, it may be asked with some show of reason, be an error in grammar? Why, grammar is a science founded in our nature, referable to our ideas of time, relation, method; imperfect, doubtless, as to the system by which it is represented; but surely we can speak of error in that which is error's criterion! All this is hypercritical, but hypercriticism must be met with its own weapons.

"Of the two expressions—*a grammatical error* and *an error in grammar*—the former is preferable. If one's judgment can accept neither, one must relinquish the belief in the possibility of tersely expressing the idea of an offense against grammatical rules. Indeed, it would be difficult to express the idea even by circumlocution. Should some one say, 'This sentence is, according to the rules of grammar, incorrect'—'What!' the hypercritic may exclaim, 'incorrect! and according to the rules of grammar!' 'This sentence, then,' the corrected person would reply, 'contains an error in grammar.' 'Nonsense!' the hypercritic may shout, 'grammar is a science; you may be wrong in its interpretation, but principles are immutable!'

"After this, it need scarcely be added that, grammat-

ically, no one can make a mistake ; that there can be no grammatical mistake ; that there can be no bad grammar, and, consequently, no bad English. A very pleasant conclusion, which would save us a great amount of trouble if it did not lack the insignificant quality of being true."—Vulgarisms and Other Errors of Speech.

**Gratuitous.** There are those that object to the use of this word in the sense of unfounded, unwarranted, unreasonable, untrue. Its use in this sense, however, has the sanction of abundant authority. "Weak and *gratuitous* conjectures."—Porson. "A *gratuitous* assumption."—Godwin. "The *gratuitous* theory."—Southey. "A *gratuitous* invention."—De Quincey. "But it is needless to dwell on the improbability of a hypothesis which [that] has been shown to be altogether *gratuitous*."—Dr. Newman.

**Greek—Grecian.** These two adjectives should not be used indiscriminately. The distinction between them is this: *Greek* means belonging to Greece ; *Grecian*, relating to Greece. An imitation of what is Greek is Grecian. A Greek shield is one preserved as a piece of antiquity ; a Grecian shield is one made after a Greek model. We speak of a Greek poet, of the Greek language, of Grecian architecture, and of Grecian history. A Greek temple is a temple of Greece ; a Grecian temple is one built in imitation of a Greek temple.

**Grow.** This verb originally meant, to increase in size, but has normally come to be also used to express a change from one state or condition to another ; as, to *grow* dark, to *grow* weak or strong, to *grow* faint, etc. But it is doubtful whether what is large can properly be said to *grow* small. In this sense, *become* would seem to be the better word, yet there is ample authority for *grow small*, *grow less*, and *grow fewer*.

**Guess.** "The only difference between the English and the American use of the word is, probably, that the former denotes a fair, candid *guess*, while the Yankee who *guesses* is apt to be quite sure of what he professes to doubt."—Schele de Vere. "Denotes, to attempt to hit upon at random. It is a gross vulgarism to use the word *guess* not in its true and specific sense, but simply for *think* or *suppose*."—Webster.

*Guess*, as used by the American, is hardly so strong in signification as *think* or *suppose*. Our *I guess* usually means, at the most, I am *inclined to think*—a sense in which the Englishman is wont to use the locution *I fancy*. To characterize *I guess* as a *gross vulgarism* is rather severe.

**Gums.** See RUBBLE & S.

**Had have.** Nothing could be more incorrect than the bringing together of these two auxiliary verbs in this manner, and yet we occasionally find it in writers of repute. Instead of "Had I known it," "Had you seen it," "Had we been there," we hear, "Had I *have* known it," "Had you *have* seen it," "Had we *have* been there." See TENSE.

**Had ought.** This is a vulgarism of the worst description; yet we hear people, that would be highly indignant if any one should intimate that they were not ladies and gentlemen, say, "He *had* ought to go." A fitting reply would be, "Yes, I think he better had." *Ought* says all that *had ought* says.

**Had rather.** This expression and *had better* are much used, but in the opinion of many are indefensible. We hear them in such sentences as, "I *had* rather not do it," "You *had* better go home." "Now, what tense," it is asked, "is *had do* and *had go*?" If we transpose the words thus, "You *had do* better (to) go home," it becomes at once

apparent, it is asserted, that the proper word to use in connection with *rather* and *better* is not *had*, but *should* or *would*; thus, "I *should* rather not do it," "You *would* better go home." Examples of this use of *had* can be found in the writings of our best authors. For what Prof. Bain has to say on this subject see his Composition Grammar.

"*Would rather* may always be substituted for *had rather*. *Might rather* would not have the same meaning. *Would* and *should* do not go well with *better*. In one instance *can* is admissible: "I can better afford," because *can* is especially associated with *afford*. We may say *might better*, but it has neither the sanction, the idiomatic force, nor the precise meaning of *had better*."—Samuel Ramsey.

"I *had rather* be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."—Psalms.

**Hain't.** A very objectionable vulgarism.

**Handy.** Should not be used in the sense of *near*, *nearby*, *close at hand*; as, "There is a grocery quite *handy*" (or *handy by*).

**Hanged—Hung.** The irregular form, *hung*, of the past participle of the verb *to hang* is most used; but when the word denotes suspension by the neck for the purpose of destroying life, the regular form, *hanged*, is always used by careful writers and speakers. We say, "I'll be *hanged* if I do," not "I'll be *hung* if I do"; and the judge says, "That you be *hanged* by the neck till you are dead," not "That you be *hung* by the neck till you are dead."

**Hardly.** Frequently misplaced, thus: "I *hardly* think I shall be able to go." Should be: "I think I shall *hardly*," etc.

**Haste.** See HURRY.

**Heading.** See CAPTION.

**Healthy—Wholesome.** The first of these two words



is often improperly used for the second ; as, "Onions are a *healthy* vegetable." A man, if he is in good health, is *healthy* ; the food he eats, if it is not deleterious, is *wholesome*. A *healthy* ox makes *wholesome* food. We speak of *healthy* surroundings, a *healthy* climate, situation, employment, and of *wholesome* food, advice, examples. *Healthful* is commonly used in the sense of conducive to health, virtue, morality ; as, *healthful* exercise, the *healthful* spirit of the community—meaning that the spirit that prevails in the community is conducive to virtue and good morals.

**Help.** This word is often used colloquially in the sense of *avoid*, *prevent*, in a very peculiar manner ; as, "I'll give him no more than I can *help*" ; whereas, regularly, it would be "*not help*," which is contrary to idiom. It is better to avoid the expression.

**Helpmate.** The dictionaries suggest that this word is a corruption of *help* and *meet*, as we find these words used in Gen. ii, 18, "I will make him a help meet for him," and that the proper word is *helpmeet*. If, as is possible, the words in Genesis mean, "I will make him a help meet [suitable] for him," then neither *helpmate* nor *helpmeet* has any *raison d'être*. *Helpmate* is to be preferred.

**Hence.** This adverb is often used when it serves no purpose ; thus, "It will be many years *hence*, we apprehend, before," etc. Futurity is fully expressed with *will be*.

**He was given,** or was tendered, and like usage. See PASSIVE.

**Highfalutin.** This is a style of writing often called the freshman style. It is much indulged in by very young men, and by a class of older men that instinctively try to make up in clatter for what they lack in matter. Examples of this kind of writing are abundant in Prof. L. T. Towasend's Art of Speech, which, as examples, are all the better for not

being of that exaggerated description sometimes met with in the newspapers. Vol. i, p. 131: "Very often adverbs, prepositions, and relatives drift so far from their moorings as to lose themselves, or make attachments where they do not belong." Again, p. 135: "Every law of speech enforces the statement that there is no excuse for such inflated and defective style. [Such style!] To speak thus is treason in the realms and under the laws of language." Again, p. 175: "Cultivate figure-making habitudes. This is done by asking the spiritual import of every physical object seen; also by forming the habit of constantly metaphORIZING. Knock at the door of anything met which [that] interests, and ask, 'Who lives here?' The process is to look, then close the eyes, then look within." The blundering inanity of this kind of writing is equaled only by its bumpitious grandiloquence.

On page 137, Dr. Townsend quotes this wholesome admonition from Coleridge: "If men would only say what they have to say in plain terms, how much more eloquent they would be!"

As an example of reportorial highfalutin I submit the following: "The spirit of departed day had joined communion with the myriad ghosts of centuries, and four full hours fled into eternity before the citizens of many parts of the town found out there was a freshet here at all."

A school committee in Massachusetts recommend exercises in English composition in these terms: "Next to the pleasure that pervades the corridors of the soul when it is entranced by the whiling witchery that presides over it consequent upon the almost divine productions of Mozart, Haydn, and Handel, whether these are executed by magician concert parts in deep and highly matured melody from artistic modulated intonations of the finely-cultured human

voice, or played by some fairy-fingered musician upon the trembling strings of the harp or piano, comes the charming delight we experience from the mastery of English prose, and the spellbinding wizards of song who by their art of divination through their magic wand, the pen, have transformed scenes hitherto unknown, and made them as immortal as those spots of the Orient and mountain haunts of the gods, whether of sunny Italy or of tuneful, heroic Greece."

We may be sure that the writer of this thought it beautiful. To him, beauty was not beauty unless adorned.

**Hints.** "Never write about any matter that you do not well understand. If you clearly understand all about your matter you will never want thoughts, and thoughts instantly become words.

"One of the greatest of all faults in writing and in speaking is this: the using of many words to *say little*. In order to guard yourself against this fault, inquire what is the *substance*, or *amount*, of what you have said. Take a long speech of some talking Lord and put down upon paper what the amount of it is. You will most likely find that the *amount* is very small; but, at any rate, when you get it, you will then be able to examine it and to tell what it is worth. A very few examinations of the sort will so frighten you that you will be for ever after upon your guard against *talking a great deal* and *saying little*."—Cobbett.

"Be simple, be unaffected, be honest in your speaking and writing. Never use a long word where a short one will do. Call a spade a *spade*, not a *well-known oblong instrument of manual husbandry*; let home be *home*, not a *residence*; a place a *place*, not a *locality*; and so of the rest. Where a short word will do, you always lose by using a

long one : you lose in clearness ; you lose in honest expression of your meaning ; and, in the estimation of all men who are qualified to judge, you lose in reputation for ability. The only true way to shine, even in this false world, is to be modest and unassuming. Falsehood may be a very thick crust, but in the course of time truth will find a place to break through. Elegance of language may not be in the power of all of us, but simplicity and straightforwardness are. Write much as you would speak ; speak as you think. If with your inferiors, speak no coarser than usual ; if with your superiors, no finer. Be what you say ; and, within the rules of prudence, say what you are.”—Dean Alford.

“Go critically over what you have written, and strike out every word, phrase, and clause which [that] it is found will leave the sentence neither less clear nor less forcible than it is with them.”—Swinton.

“With all watchfulness, it is astonishing what slips are made, even by good writers, in the employment of an inappropriate word. In Gibbon’s *Rise and Fall* the following instance occurs : ‘Of nineteen tyrants who started up after the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who *enjoyed* a life of peace or a natural *death*.’ And not long since a worthy Scotch minister, at the close of the services, intimated his intention of visiting some of his people as follows : ‘I intend during this week to visit in Mr. M——’s district, and will on this occasion take the opportunity of *embracing* all the servants in the district.’ When worthies such as these offend, who shall call the bellman in question as he cries, ‘Lost, a silver-handled silk lady’s parasol’ ?

“The proper arrangement of words into sentences and paragraphs gives clearness and strength. To attain a clear and pithy style, it may be necessary to cut down, to re-

arrange, and to rewrite whole passages of an essay. Gibbon wrote his *Memoirs* six times, and the first chapter of his *History* three times. Beginners are always slow to prune or cast away any thought or expression which may have cost labor. They forget that brevity is no sign of thoughtlessness. Much consideration is needed to compress the details of any subject into small compass. Essences are more difficult to prepare, and therefore more valuable, than weak solutions. Pliny wrote to one of his friends, 'I have not time to write you a short letter, therefore I have written you a long one.' Apparent elaborateness is always distasteful and weak. Vividness and strength are the product of an easy command of those small trenchant Saxon monosyllables which abound in the English language."—Leisure Hour.

"As a rule, the student will do well to banish for the present all thought of ornament or elegance, and to aim only at expressing himself plainly and clearly. The best ornament is always that which comes unsought. Let him not beat about the bush, but go straight to the point. Let him remember that what is written is meant to be read; that time is short; and that, other things being equal, the fewer words the better. . . . Repetition is a far less serious fault than obscurity. Young writers are often unduly afraid of repeating the same word, and require to be reminded that it is always better to use the right word over again than to replace it by [with] a wrong one—and a word which is liable to be misunderstood is a wrong one. A frank repetition of a word sometimes has even a kind of charm—as bearing the stamp of *truth*, the foundation of all excellence of style."—Hall.

"A young writer is afraid to be simple; he has no faith in beauty unadorned, hence he crowds his sentences with

superlatives. In his estimation turgidity passes for eloquence, and simplicity is but another name for that which is weak and unmeaning."—George Washington Moon.

**Hit.** The using of this word in the sense of *success* is incompatible with dignified diction; it is, at the best, but one remove from slang.

Instead of "He made a great *hit*," say rather, "He was very successful," if this is the thought intended. In the sentence, "The speaker made some capital *hits*," the sense is quite different.

**Honorable.** See REVEREND.

**How.** "I have heard *how*, in Italy, one is beset on all sides by beggars"; read, "heard *that*." "I have heard *how* some critics have been pacified with claret and a supper, and others laid asleep with soft notes of flattery."—Dr. Johnson. The *how* in this sentence also should be *that*. *How* means the *manner in which*. We may therefore say, "I have heard *how* he went about it to circumvent you."

"And it is good judgment alone can dictate *how far* to proceed in it and *when* to stop." Cobbett comments on this sentence in this wise: "Dr. Watts is speaking here of writing. In such a case an adverb, like *how far*, expressive of longitudinal space, introduces a *rhetorical figure*; for the plain meaning is, that judgment will dictate *how much* to write on it, and not *how far* to proceed in it. The figure, however, is very proper, and much better than the literal words. But when a figure is *begun* it should be carried on throughout, which is not the case here; for the doctor begins with a figure of longitudinal space and ends with a figure of *time*. It should have been, *where* to stop; or, how *long* to proceed in it and *when* to stop. To tell a man *how far* he is to go into the western countries of America

and *when* he is to stop, is a very different thing from telling him *how far* he is to go and *where* he is to stop. I have dwelt thus on this distinction for the purpose of putting you on the watch and guarding you against confounding figures. The less you use them the better, till you understand more about them."

**NOTE.**—The *alone* in the first line of the paragraph above is misused. The meaning is: The *only* thing that can dictate in the matter is good judgment. We could not say, 'the *alone* thing.' If *alone* were correct, then the meaning would be: Judgment unaided—i. e., *alone*—can dictate in the matter. The relative, being in the nominative, must not be omitted. Dr. Watts, then, should have written: "And it is good judgment *only that* can dictate," etc.

**However.** "*However* learned one may be, there is a limit to one's knowledge." Here the word is properly used, but it is not properly used in a sentence such as this: "*However* could you tell such a story!" Properly, "*How* could you *ever*," etc.

**Humanitarianism.** This word, in its original, theological sense, means the doctrine that denies the Godhead of Jesus Christ, and avers that he was possessed of a human nature only; a *humanitarian*, therefore, in the theological sense, is one that believes this doctrine. The word and its derivatives, however, nowadays, both in this country and in England, are most used in a humane, philanthropic sense; thus, "The audience enthusiastically indorsed [applauded?] the *humanitarianism* of his eloquent discourse."—Hatton.

**Hung.** See HANGED.

**Hurry.** Though widely different in meaning, both the verb and the noun *hurry* are continually used for *haste* and *hasten*. *Hurry* implies not only *haste*, but haste with confusion, flurry; while *haste* implies only rapidity of action, an eager desire to make progress, and, unlike *hurry*, is not

incompatible with deliberation and dignity. It is often wise to *hasten* in the affairs of life ; but, as it is never wise to proceed without forethought and method, it is never wise to *hurry*. Sensible people, then, may be often in *haste* but are never in a *hurry* ; and we tell others to *make haste*, and not to *hurry up*.

"If you do not *hurry* [hasten] you will not arrive in time."

"Though I am in a *great hurry* [great haste], I can not let the opportunity slip to let you know," etc.

"The aldermen are in no *hurry* [haste] to revive street music."—N. Y. Sun.

**Hyperbole.** The magnifying of things beyond their natural limits is called *hyperbole*. Language that signifies, literally, more than the exact truth, more than is really intended to be represented, by which a thing is represented greater or less, better or worse, than it really is, is said to be *hyperbolical*. Hyperbole is exaggeration.

"Our common forms of compliment are almost all of them extravagant *hyperboles*."—Blair.

Some examples are the following ·

"Rivers of blood and hills of slain."

"They were swifter than eagles ; they were stronger than lions."

"The sky shrunk upward with unusual dread,  
And trembling Tiber dived beneath his bed."

"So frowned the mighty combatants, that hell  
Grew darker at their frown."

"I saw their chief, tall as a rock of ice ; his spear, the blasted fir ; his shield, the rising moon : he sat on the shore, like a cloud of mist on a hill."

**Ice cream—Ice water.** As for ice cream, there is no such thing, as ice cream would be the product of frozen



cream—i. e., cream made from ice by melting. What is called ice cream is cream *iced*; hence, properly, *iced* cream, and not *ice* cream. The product of melted ice is *ice* water, whether it be cold or warm; but water made cold with ice is *iced* water, and not *ice* water.

"The Norwegians have gained credit for setting to Europe the example of having *iced water* in their railway cars."—N. Y. Sun.

"A butler was in attendance with provision baskets, wine, fruit, *iced water*," etc.—James Anthony Froude.

**Idea.** Should not be used in the sense of *opinion*.

"Few words," says an English writer, "have been more completely transformed in meaning than the little word *idea*. Strange to say, this word is rarely misapplied, even in conversation, by the better class of Americans. Englishmen, whether in writing or [in] speaking, invariably lose sight of the true meaning of the word. To 'have an *idea* that it is best to act justly on all occasions,' is a barbarous misuse of a word which [that] is very expressive and beautiful as used by our old writers. Shakespeare on no occasion, so far as we can recollect, uses the word as meaning an *opinion*, but as a mental vision."

"I have an idea [it is my opinion, or, I have an impression] that you had better wait till to-morrow."

**If.** "I doubt *if* this will ever reach you": say, "I doubt *whether* this will ever reach you." "Go and see *if* [whether] he has come."

**Ill.** See SICK.

**Illy.** It will astonish not a few to learn that there is no such word as *illy*. The form of the adverb, as well as of the adjective and the noun, is *ill*. A thing is *ill* formed, or *ill* done, or *ill* made, or *ill* constructed, or *ill* put together.

"*Ill* fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

Goldsmith.

**Immodest.** This adjective and its synonyms, *indecent* and *indelicate*, are often used without proper discrimination being made in their respective meanings. *Indecency* and *immodesty* are opposed to morality: *indecent* in externals, as dress, words, and looks; *immodesty* in conduct and disposition. "*Indecency*," says Crabb, "may be a partial, *immodesty* is a positive and entire, breach of the moral law. *Indecency* is less than *immodesty* but more than *indelicate*." It is *indecent* for a man to marry again very soon after the death of his wife. It is *indelicate* for any one to obtrude himself upon another's retirement. It is *indecent* for women to expose their persons as do some that we can not call *immodest*.

"Immodest words admit of no defense,  
For want of decency is want of sense."

Earl of Roscommon.

**Imperfect Tense, misuse of.** Few errors are more frequently made than that of using the imperfect tense when the thought requires the perfect.

"He is the worst boy I ever *saw* [have seen]."

"You never *saw* [have seen] such an excitement as it created."

"I *was* [have been] often told that I *had* [have] a phenomenally large head, but I fancy yours is larger."

"The best district attorney New York ever *had* [has had] *never tried* [did not try] Mr. Dudley under the indictment."

"One of the most extraordinary psychological phenomena that ever *was* [has been] witnessed among mankind."

"Personally, he is one of the pleasantest men I ever *met* [have met]."

"He was the most successful merchant, in a way, the great metropolis ever [has] contained."

"The court officers say they never [have] had so parsimonious a prisoner in their custody."

"One of the finest bucks I ever [have] killed was shot in this way."

"That's the brightest woman I ever [have] met."

"I never *knew* [have known] anything so provoking"; better, "I never before have known," etc.

"Posterity will say that he [Cobden] was one of the most eminent men that ever [have] adorned the Parliament of this country."—John Bright. This great master of English, it will be observed, says "men *that*," and not "men *who*."

"Though I have been trained as a soldier and [have] participated in many battles, there never *was* [has been] a time when, in my opinion, some way could not be [have been] found of preventing [to prevent] the drawing of the sword."—U. S. Grant.

"There never *was* [has been] a time since the beginning of the Christian era, and there never *was* [has been] a country, in which so many men and women," etc.—John Bright.

"Mr. Lincoln was a keen and accurate judge of character, and could detect fraud and imposture as readily as any man I ever *knew* [have known]."

"I never [have] heard Mr. Bright beaten in repartee except by one person, and that was by a bishop."—Chamberlain. This might be correct.

"There never was [has been] one more willing to go than I am."—Gen. Grant.

"He [Grant] was the manliest man I ever *knew* [have known]."—Com. French.

"His [Grant's] was one of the happiest dispositions I ever *knew* [have known]."—Gen. Horace Porter.

**Implicate.** See INVOLVE.

**Implicit.** Most writers use this adjective in what is called its vulgar sense—i. e., in the sense of *absolute, unquestioning, unbounded*, etc.—as in such phrases as "implicit faith," "implicit confidence," "implicit obedience."

Its primitive meaning is *infolded, entangled, involved*.

Its secondary, metaphorical meaning, which is *inferred*; *tacitly comprised, though not virtually expressed*, is the meaning in which it is used in the following examples:

"An *implicit* [tacit, virtual] compact."

"To make *explicit* what is *implicit* in thought and its expression is a sign of intellectual progress."

"The author, by personally sending his work, or by directing his accredited agent, the publisher, to act for him, *implicitly* enters into an agreement that an opinion shall be pronounced; tacit and *implied* only, but still morally binding."

"Why should it be unnatural to suppose that speech was at first *implicitly* [virtually] bestowed on us, and that it required time and experience to develop fully the implanted capacity?"

"Tito's *implicit* [inferred?] desires were working themselves out now in very explicit thought."

**Impropriety.** As a rhetorical term, defined as an error in using words in a sense different from their recognized signification.

**Impute.** Nonpainstaking writers not infrequently use *impute* instead of *ascribe*. "The numbers [of blunders] that have been *imputed* to him are endless."—Appletons'

Journal. The use of *impute* in this sentence is by no means indefensible; still it would have been better to use *ascribe*.

**In.** Frequently used by very good speakers when they should use *into*. We say properly, "Come in" and "Go in"; but we can not properly say, "Come *in* the house" or "Go *in* the house." Here, *into* is the proper word to use. We put *into* boxes, throw *into* the water. The distinction is commonly very simple.

**In our midst.** The phrases *in our midst*, *in your midst*, and *in their midst* are said to be of recent introduction. Though they have been used by some writers of repute, they nevertheless find no favor with those that study propriety in the use of language. "They," says Webster's Dictionary, "are contrary to the genius of the language as well as opposed to the practice of our best and most accurate writers, and should therefore be abandoned."

"*In the midst of them*," on the contrary, is good English—is an old, elegant, and honored formula of the language.

**In respect of.** "The deliberate introduction of incorrect forms, whether by the coinage of new or the revival of obsolete and inexpressive syntactical combinations, ought to be resisted even in trifles, especially where it leads to the confusion of distinct ideas. An example of this is the recent use of the adverbial phrases *in respect of*, *in regard of*, for *in* or *with respect to*, or *regard to*. This innovation is without any syntactical ground, and ought to be condemned and avoided as a mere grammatical crotchet."—George P. Marsh, Lectures on the English Language, p. 660.

**Inaugurate.** This word, which means, to install in office with certain ceremonies, is made by many lovers of

big words to do service for *begin*; but the sooner these rhetorical highfliers stop *inaugurating* and content themselves with simply *beginning* the things they are called upon to do in the ordinary routine of daily life, the sooner they will cease to set a very bad example.

**Indecent.** See IMMODEST.

**Index expurgatorius.** William Cullen Bryant, who was a careful student of English, while he was editor of the New York Evening Post, sought to prevent the writers for that paper from using "over and above (for 'more than'); artiste (for 'artist'); aspirant; authoress; beat (for 'defeat'); bagging (for 'capturing'); balance (for 'remainder'); banquet (for 'dinner' or 'supper'); bogus; casket (for 'coffin'); claimed (for 'asserted'); collided; commence (for 'begin'); compete; cortège (for 'procession'); cotemporary (for 'contemporary'); couple (for 'two'); darky (for 'negro'); day before yesterday (for 'the day before yesterday'); début; decrease (as a verb); democracy (applied to a political party); develop (for 'expose'); devouring element (for 'fire'); donate; employé; enacted (for 'acted'); indorse (for 'approve'); en route; esq.; graduate (for 'is graduated'); gents (for 'gentlemen'); 'Hon. House' (for 'House of Representatives'); humbug; inaugurate (for 'begin'); in our midst; item (for 'particle, extract, or paragraph'); is being done, and all passives of this form; jeopardize; jubilant (for 'rejoicing'); juvenile (for 'boy'); lady (for 'wife'); last (for 'latest'); lengthy (for 'long'); leniency (for 'lenity'); loafer; loan or loaned (for 'lend' or 'lent'); located; majority (relating to places or circumstances, for 'most'); Mrs. President, Mrs. Governor, Mrs. General, and all similar titles; mutual (for 'common'); official (for 'officer'); ovation; on yesterday; over his signature; pants (for 'pantaloons'); parties

(for 'persons'); partially (for 'partly'); past two weeks (for 'last two weeks,' and all similar expressions relating to a definite time); poetess; portion (for 'part'); posted (for 'informed'); progress (for 'advance'); reliable (for 'trust-worthy'); rendition (for 'performance'); repudiate (for 'reject' or 'disown'); retire (as an active verb); Rev. (for 'the Rev.'); rôle (for 'part'); roughs; rowdies; secesh; sensation (for 'noteworthy event'); standpoint (for 'point of view'); start, in the sense of setting out; state (for 'say'); taboo; talent (for 'talents' or 'ability'); talented; tapis; the deceased; war (for 'dispute' or 'disagreement').'

This index is offered here as a curiosity rather than as a guide, though in the main it might safely be used as such. No valid reason, however, can be urged for discouraging the use of several words in the list; the words aspirant, banquet, casket, compete, decrease, progress, start, talented, and deceased, for example.

**Indicative and Subjunctive.** " 'I see the signal,' is unconditional; 'if I see the signal,' is the same fact expressed in the form of a condition. The one form is said to be in the *indicative* mood, the mood that simply *states* or *indicates* the action; the other form is in the *subjunctive*, conditional, or conjunctive mood. There is sometimes a slight variation made in English, to show that an affirmation is made as a condition. The mood is called 'subjunctive,' because the affirmation *is subjoined* to another affirmation: 'If I see the signal, I will call out.'

"Such forms as 'I may see,' 'I can see,' have sometimes been considered as a variety of mood, to which the name 'Potential' is given; but this can not properly be maintained. There is no trace of any inflection corresponding to this meaning, as we find with the subjunctive. Moreover, such a mood would have itself to be subdivided

into indicative and subjunctive forms: 'I may go,' 'If I may go.' And, further, we might proceed to constitute other moods on the same analogy, as, for example, an obligatory mood—'I must go,' or 'I ought to go'; a mood of resolution—'I will go,' 'You shall go'; a mood of gratification—'I am delighted to go'; of deprecation—'I am grieved to go.' The only difference in the last two instances is the use of the sign of the infinitive 'to,' which does not occur after 'may,' 'can,' 'must,' 'ought,' etc.; but that is not an essential difference. Some grammarians consider the form 'I do go' a separate mood, and term it the emphatic mood. But all the above objections apply to it likewise, as well as many others."—Bain. See SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD.

**Individual.** Often most improperly used for *person* or *man*. The word is correctly used thus:

"It is to the Germans as a nation that I object, and not as *individuals*, for among them I have met many excellent persons."

Some examples of the improper use of the word are the following:

"That *individual* [person] left here several hours ago."

"Everything around betokened the habitation of an *individual* [a person] of taste."

"Who can believe that Petrarch's passion for such an *individual* [a person] as Laura was anything but a convenient hook whereon to hang a splendid work of art!"

"Many of the *individuals* [men] selected by Col. Strong for important offices might," etc.—N. Y. Sun.

"The editor is expected to furnish a phrenograph of some distinguished *individual* [person] every month," etc.

The word is correctly used thus:



"Changes both in *individuals* and communities are often produced by trifles."

"Events affect nations and communities as well as *individuals*."

"To know this is to rob the pestilence of some of the terrors for the *individual*, and of nearly all of them for a community with Christian ideas of cleanliness."—N. Y. Times.

*Individual* means, etymologically, that that can not be divided, and is used, in speaking of things as well as of persons, to express unity. It is opposed to what is divisible into parts.

**Indorse.** Careful writers commonly discountenance the use of *indorse* in the sense of *sanction*, *approve*, *applaud*. In this signification it is on the list of prohibited words in some of our newspaper offices.

"The following rules are *indorsed* by nearly all writers upon [on] this subject."—Dr. Townsend. It is plain that the right word to use here is *approved*.

"The public will heartily *indorse* the sentiments uttered by the court."—New York Evening Telegram. "The public will heartily *approve* the sentiments *expressed* by the court," is what the sentence should be.

**Inferior—Superior.** "An *inferior* person," a "*superior* woman," and like phrases, are grammatical, are perhaps idiomatic, and are certainly defended; yet the fact remains that they are not good rhetoric. It is doubtful whether in strictness they should ever be used, when denoting quality, in other than a comparative sense.

**Infinitive Mood.** When we can choose, it is usually better to use the verb in the infinitive than in the participial form. "Ability being in general the power *of doing*," etc. Say, *to do*. "I desire to reply . . . to the proposal *of sub-*

*stituting* a tax upon land values, . . . and *making* this tax, as near [nearly] as may be, equal to rent," etc. Say, *to substitute* and *to make*. "This quality is of prime importance when the chief object is *the imparting of knowledge*." Say, *to impart*.

**Initiate.** This is a pretentious word that, with its derivatives, many persons—especially those that like to be grandiloquent—use when homely English would serve their turn much better.

**Innumerable Number.** A repetitional expression to be avoided. We may say *innumerable* times, or *numberless* times, but we should not say an *innumerable number* of times.

**In so far as.** A phrase often met with, and in which the *in* is superfluous. "A want of proper opportunity would suffice, *in* so far as the want could be shown." "We are to act up to the extent of our knowledge; but, *in* so far as our knowledge falls short," etc. *So far as* expresses all that is meant.

**Intend.** This word is often employed when *purpose* would better express the thought. We *purpose* seriously; we *intend* vaguely. We set about what we *purpose*; we may delay what we only *intend*. An *intention*, therefore, is weaker than a *purpose*. *Purpose* is the proper word to use when the object is proximate and definite; *intend*, when the object is remote and indefinite.

"My *intention* at present is to spend next summer at Newport, but between now and then I may, of course, change my mind."

"This is my last day in town; I *purpose* leaving for home in the morning." See PROPOSE.

**Interrogation.** The rhetorical figure that asks a question in order to emphasize the reverse of what is asked is

called *interrogation* ; as, " Do we mean to submit to this measure ? Do we mean to submit, and consent that we ourselves, our country and its rights, shall be trampled on ? "

" Doth God pervert judgment ? or doth the Almighty pervert justice ? "

**Introduce.** See PRESENT.

**Involve.** Persons that are not careful in selecting the words they use sometimes misuse *involve* for *implicate*. Here is an instance :

" Further developments in the fraudulent transactions of a number of the employees disclose instances of dishonesty that *involve* [implicate] several prominent individuals [persons] connected with the road."

*Involve* is used in the affairs of life that are only troublesome ; *implicate* in those that are criminal. *Involve* is correctly used thus :

" Heavy failure in Minnesota. The Mazeppa Mill Company suspends ; many Eastern men *involved*."—N. Y. Times.

**Irony.** That mode of speech in which what is meant is contrary to the literal meaning of the words—in which praise is bestowed when censure is intended—is called *irony*. Irony is a kind of delicate sarcasm or satire—raillery, mockery.

" In writings of humor, figures are sometimes used of so delicate a nature that it shall often happen that some people will see things in a direct [directly] contrary sense to what the author and the majority of the readers understand them : to such the most innocent *irony* may appear irreligion."—Cambridge.

**Irritate.** See AGGRAVATE.

**Is being.** A tolerable idea of the state of the discussion regarding the propriety of using the locution *is being*

*built*, and all like expressions, will, it is hoped, be obtained from the following extracts. The Rev. Peter Bullions, in his Grammar of the English Language, says:

“There is properly no *passive* form, in English, *corresponding to the progressive* form in the *active* voice, except where it is made by the participle *ing*, in a passive sense; thus, ‘The house is building’; ‘The garments are making’; ‘Wheat is selling,’ etc. An attempt has been made by some grammarians, of late, to banish such expressions from the language, though they have been used in all time past by the best writers, and to justify and defend a clumsy solecism, which has been recently introduced chiefly through the newspaper press, but which has gained such currency, and is becoming so familiar to the ear, that it seems likely to prevail, with all its uncouthness and deformity. I refer to such expressions as ‘The house is being built’; ‘The letter is being written’; ‘The mine is being worked’; ‘The news is being telegraphed,’ etc.

“This mode of expression *had no existence* in the language till *within the last fifty years*.<sup>\*</sup> This, indeed, would not make the expression wrong, were it otherwise unexceptionable; but its recent origin shows that it is not, as is pretended, a *necessary* form.

“This form of expression, when analyzed, is found not to express what it is intended to express, and would be used only by such as are either ignorant of its import or are careless and loose in their use of language. To make this manifest, let it be considered, first, that there is *no progressive form* of the verb *to be*, and no need of it; hence, there is no such expression in English as *is being*. Of course the expression ‘*is being built*,’ for example, is not a compound of *is being* and *built*, but of *is* and *being built*; that is, of

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<sup>\*</sup> Bullions’ Grammar was published in 1867.

the verb *to be* and the *present participle passive*. Now, let it be observed that the only verbs in which the present participle passive expresses a continued action are those mentioned above as the first class, in which the regular passive form expresses a *continuance* of the action; as, *is loved, is desired*, etc., and in which, of course, the form in question (*is being built*) is not required. Nobody would think of saying, 'He is being loved'; 'This result is being desired.'

"The use of this form is justified only by *condemning an established usage* of the language; namely, the passive sense in some verbs of the participle in *ing*. In reference to this it is flippantly asked, 'What does the house build?' 'What does the letter write?' etc.—taking for granted, without attempting to prove, that the participle in *ing* can not have a passive sense in any verb. The following are a few examples from writers of the best reputation, which this novelty would condemn: 'While the ceremony was performing.'—Tom Brown. 'The court was then holding.'—Sir G. McKenzie. 'And still be doing, never done.'—Butler. 'The books are selling.'—Allen's Grammar. 'To know nothing of what is transacting in the regions above us.'—Dr. Blair. 'The spot where this new and strange tragedy was acting.'—E. Everett. 'The fortress was building.'—Irving. 'An attempt is making in the English Parliament.'—D. Webster. 'The church now erecting in the city of New York.'—North Amer. Review. 'These things were transacting in England.'—Bancroft.

"This new doctrine is in *opposition* to the almost *unanimous judgment* of the *most distinguished grammarians* and critics who have considered the subject and expressed their views concerning it. The following are specimens: 'Expressions of this kind are condemned by some critics;

but the usage is unquestionably of far better authority, and (according to my apprehension) in far better taste, than the more complex phraseology which some late writers adopt in its stead ; as, "The books are now being sold."—Goold Brown. 'As to the notion of introducing a new and more complex passive form of conjugation, as, "The bridge *is being built*," "The bridge *was being built*," and so forth, it is one of the most absurd and monstrous innovations ever thought of. "The work *is now being published*" is certainly no better English than "The work *was being published, has been being published, had been being published, shall or will be being published, shall or will have been being published*," and so on through all the moods and tenses. What a language shall we have when our verbs are thus conjugated !'—Brown's Gr. of Eng. Gr., p. 361. De War observes : 'The participle in *ing* is also passive in many instances ; as, "The house is building," "I heard of a plan forming,"' etc.—Quoted in Frazee's Grammar, p. 49. 'It would be an absurdity, indeed, to give up the only way we have of denoting the incomplete state of action by a passive form (viz., by the participle in *ing* in the passive sense).'—Arnold's English Grammar, p. 46. 'The present participle is often used passively ; as, "The ship is building." The form of expression, *is being built, is being committed*, etc., is almost universally condemned by grammarians, but it is sometimes met with in respectable writers. It occurs most frequently in newspaper paragraphs and in hasty compositions. See Worcester's Universal and Critical Dictionary.'—Weld's Grammar, pp. 118 and 180. 'When we say, "The house is building," the advocates of the new theory ask, "Building what?" We might ask, in turn, when you say, "The field plows well"—"Plows what?" "Wheat sells well"—"Sells what?" If usage

allows us to say, "Wheat sells at a dollar," in a sense that is not active, why may we not say, "Wheat is selling at a dollar," in a sense that is not active?"—Hart's Grammar, p. 76. 'The prevailing practice of the best authors is in favor of the simple form; as, "The house is building."—Wells' School Grammar, p. 148. 'Several other expressions of this sort now and then occur, such as the new-fangled and most uncouth solecism "*is being done*," for the good old English idiom "*is doing*"—an absurd periphrasis driving out a pointed and pithy turn of the English language.'—North Amer. Review, quoted by Mr. Wells, p. 148. 'The phrase "is being built," and others of a similar kind, have been for a few years insinuating themselves into our language; still they are not English.'—Harrison's Rise, Progress, and Present Structure of the English Language. 'This mode of expression [the house is being built] is becoming quite common. It is liable, however, to several important objections. It appears formal and pedantic. It has not, as far as I know, the support of any respectable grammarian. The easy and natural expression is, "The house is building"'—Prof. J. W. Gibbs."

Mr. Richard Grant White, in his *Words and Their Uses*, expresses his opinion of the locution *is being* in this wise: "In bad eminence, at the head of those intruders in language which to many persons seem to be of established respectability, but the right of which to be at all is not fully admitted, stands out the form of speech *is being done*, or rather, *is being*, which, about seventy or eighty years ago, began to affront the eye, torment the ear, and assault the common sense of the speaker of plain and idiomatic English." Mr. White devotes thirty pages of his book to the discussion of the subject, and adduces evidence that is more than sufficient to convince those that are content with

an *ex parte* examination that "it can hardly be that such an incongruous and ridiculous form of speech as *is being done* was contrived by a man who, by any stretch of the name, should be included among grammarians."

Mr. George P. Marsh, in his Lectures on the English Language, says that the deviser of the locution in question was "some grammatical pretender," and that it is "an awkward neologism which neither convenience, intelligibility, nor syntactical congruity demands."

To these gentlemen, and to those that are of their way of thinking with regard to *is being*, Dr. Fitzedward Hall replies at some length, in an article published in Scribner's Monthly for April, 1872. Dr. Hall writes:

"All really well educated in the English tongue lament the many innovations introduced into our language from America; and I doubt if more than one of these novelties deserve acceptance. That one is, substituting a compound participle for an active verb used in a neuter signification: for instance, 'The house is *being built*,' instead of, 'The house is *building*.'" Such is the assertion and such is the opinion of some anonymous luminary,\* who, for his liberality in welcoming a supposed Americanism, is somewhat in advance of the herd of his countrymen. Almost any popular expression which is considered as a novelty, a Briton is pretty certain to assume off-hand to have originated on our side of the Atlantic. Of the assertion I have quoted, no proof is offered; and there is little probability that its author had any to offer. 'Are being,' in the phrase 'are being thrown up,' † is spoken of in The North Ameri-

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\* "L. W. K., CLK., LL. D., EX. SCH., T. C., D. Of this reverend gentleman's personality I know nothing. He does not say exactly what he means; but what he means is, yet, unmistakable. The extract given above is from Public Opinion, January 20, 1866."

† "The analysis, taken for granted in this quotation, of 'are being



can Review\* as 'an outrage upon English idiom, "to be detested, abhorred, execrated, and given over to six thousand" penny-paper editors'; and the fact is, that phrases of the form here pointed at have hitherto enjoyed very much less favor with us than with the English.

"As lately as 1860, Dr. Worcester, referring to *is being built*, etc., while acknowledging that 'this new form has been used by some respectable writers,' speaks of it as having 'been introduced' 'within a few years.' Mr. Richard Grant White, by a most peculiar process of ratiocination, endeavors to prove that what Dr. Worcester calls 'this new form' came into existence just fifty-six years ago. He premises that in Jarvis's translation of Don Quixote, published in 1742, there occurs 'were carrying,' and that this, in the edition of 1818, is sophisticated into 'were being carried.' 'This change,' continues our logician, 'and the appearance of *is being* with a perfect participle in a very few books published between A. D. 1815 and 1820, indicate the former period as that of the origin of this phraseology, which, although more than half a century old, is still pronounced a novelty as well as a nuisance.'

"Who, in the next place, devised our modern imperfects passive? The question is not, originally, of my asking; but, as the learned are at open feud on the subject, it should not be passed by in silence. Its deviser is, more than likely, as undiscoverable as the name of the valiant antediluvian who first tasted an oyster. But the deductive character of the miscreant is another thing; and hereon there is a war between the philosophers. Mr. G. P. Marsh, as if he had actually spotted the wretched creature, passionately

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thrown up' into 'are being' and 'thrown up' will be dealt with in the sequel, and shown to be untenable."

\* "Vol. xlv, p. 504 (1837)."

and categorically denounces him as 'some grammatical pretender.' 'But,' replies Mr. White, 'that it is the work of any grammarian is more than doubtful. Grammarians, with all their faults, do not deform language with fantastic solecisms, or even seek to enrich it with new and startling verbal combinations. They rather resist novelty, and devote themselves to formulating that which use has already established.' In the same page with this, Mr. White compliments the great unknown as 'some precise and feeble-minded soul,' and elsewhere calls him 'some pedantic writer of the last generation.' To add even one word toward a solution of the knotty point here indicated transcends, I confess, my utmost competence. It is painful to picture to one's self the agonizing emotions with which certain philologists would contemplate an authentic effigy of the Attila of speech who, by his *is being built* or *is being done*, first offered violence to the whole circle of the proprieties. So far as I have observed, the first grammar that exhibits them is that of Mr. R. S. Skillern, M. A., the first edition of which was published at Gloucester in 1802. Robert Southey had not, on the 9th of October, 1795, been out of his minority quite two months when, evidently delivering himself in a way that had already become familiar enough, he wrote of 'a fellow whose uttermost upper grinder *is being torn out* by the roots by a mutton-fisted barber.'\* This is in a letter. But repeated instances of the same kind of expression are seen in Southey's graver writings. Thus, in his Colloquies, etc., † we read of 'such [nunneries] as at this time *are being re-established*.'

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\* "The Life and Correspondence of the late Robert Southey, vol. i, p. 249."

† "Vol. i, p. 338. 'A student who *is being crammed*'; 'that verb *is* eternally *being declined*.'—The Doctor, pp. 38 and 40 (monotome ed.)."

“‘While my hand *was being drest* by Mr. Young, I spoke for the first time,’ wrote Coleridge, in March, 1797.

“Charles Lamb speaks of realities which ‘*are being acted* before us,’ and of ‘a man who *is being strangled*.’

“Walter Savage Landor, in an imaginary conversation, represents Pitt as saying: ‘The man who possesses them may read Swedenborg and Kant while he *is being tossed* in a blanket.’ Again: ‘I have seen nobles, men and women, kneeling in the street before these bishops, when no ceremony of the Catholic Church *was being performed*.’ Also, in a translation from Catullus: ‘Some criminal *is being tried* for murder.’

“Nor does Mr. De Quincey scruple at such English as ‘made and *being made*,’ ‘the bride that *was being married* to him,’ and ‘the shafts of heaven *were* even now *being forged*.’ On one occasion he writes, ‘Not done, not even (according to modern purism) *being done*’; as if ‘purism’ meant exactness rather than the avoidance of neoterism.

“I need surely name no more, among the dead, who found *is being built*, or the like, acceptable. ‘Simple-minded common people and those of culture were alike protected against it by their attachment to the idiom of their mother tongue, with which they felt it to be directly at variance.’ So Mr. White informs us. But the writers whom I have quoted are formidable exceptions. Even Mr. White will scarcely deny to them the title of ‘people of culture.’

“So much for offenders past repentance; and we all know that the sort of phraseology under consideration is daily becoming more and more common. The best written of the English reviews, magazines, and journals are perpetually marked by it, and some of the choicest of living English writers employ it freely. Among these, it is

enough if I specify Bishop Wilberforce and Mr. Charles Reade.\*

"Extracts from Bishop Jewel downward being also given, Lord Macaulay, Mr. Dickens, The Atlantic Monthly, and The Brooklyn Eagle are alleged by Mr. White in proof that people still use such phrases as 'Chelsea Hospital *was building*,' and 'the train *was preparing*.' 'Hence we see,' he adds, † 'that the form *is being done, is being made, is being built*, lacks the support of authoritative usage from the period of the earliest classical English to the present day.' I fully concur with Mr. White in regarding 'neither The Brooklyn Eagle nor Mr. Dickens as a very high authority in the use of language'; yet, when he has renounced the aid of these contemned straws, what has he to rest his inference on, as to the present day, but the practice of Lord Macaulay and The Atlantic Monthly? Those who think fit will bow to the dictatorship here prescribed to them; but there may be those with whom the classic sanction of Southey, Coleridge, and Landor will not be wholly void of weight. All scholars are aware that, to convey the sense of the imperfects passive, our ancestors centuries ago prefixed with *is*, etc., *in*, afterward corrupted into *a*, to a verbal substantive. 'The house *is in building*' could be taken to mean nothing but *ædes ædificantur*; and when the *in* gave place to *a*, ‡ it was still manifest enough, from the context, that *building* was governed by a preposition. The second stage of change, however—namely,

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\* "In Put Yourself in his Place, chap. x, he writes: 'She basked in the present delight, and looked as if she *was being taken* to heaven by an angel.'"

† "Words, etc., p. 340."

‡ "Thomas Fuller writes: 'At his arrival, the last stake of the Christians *was on losing*.'—The Historie of the Holy Warre, p. 218 (ed. 1647)."

when the *a* was omitted—entailed in many cases great danger of confusion. In the early part of the last century, when English was undergoing what was then thought to be purification, the polite world substantially resigned *is a-building* to the vulgar. Toward the close of the same century, when, under the influence of free thought, it began to be felt that even ideas had a right to faithful and unequivocal representation, a just resentment of ambiguity was evidenced in the creation of *is being built*. The lament is too late that the instinct of reformation did not restore the old form. It has gone forever, and we are now to make the best of its successors. “The brass *is forging*,” in the opinion of Dr. Johnson, is ‘a vicious expression, probably corrupted from a phrase more pure but now somewhat obsolete, . . . “the brass *is a-forging*.”’ Yet, with a true Tory’s timidity and aversion to change, it is not surprising that he went on preferring what he found established, vicious as it confessedly was, to the end. But was the expression ‘vicious’ solely because it was a corruption? In 1787 William Beckford wrote as follows of the fortune-tellers of Lisbon: ‘*I saw one dragging into light*, as I passed by the ruins of a palace thrown down by the earthquake. Whether a familiar of the Inquisition was griping her in his clutches, or *whether she was taking to account by some disappointed votary*, I will not pretend to answer.’ Are the expressions here italicized either perspicuous or graceful? Whatever we are to have in their place, we should be thankful to get quit of them.

“Inasmuch as, concurrently with *building* for the active participle, and *being built* for the corresponding passive participle, we possessed the former, with *is* prefixed, as the active present imperfect, it is in rigid accordance with the symmetry of our verb that, to construct the passive present-

imperfect, we prefix *is* to the latter, producing the form *is being built*. Such, in its greatest simplicity, is the procedure which, as will be seen, has provoked a very levanter of ire and vilification. But anything that is new will be excepted to by minds of a certain order. Their tremulous and impatient dread of removing ancient landmarks even disqualifies them for thoroughly investigating its character and pretensions. In *has built* and *will build*, we find the active participle perfect and the active infinitive subjoined to auxiliaries; and so, in *has been built* and *will be built*, the passive participle perfect and the passive infinitive are subjoined to auxiliaries. In *is building* and *is being built*, we have, in strict harmony with the constitution of the perfect and future tenses, an auxiliary followed by the active participle present and the passive participle present. *Built* is determined as active or passive by the verbs which qualify it, *have* and *be*; and the grammarians are right in considering it, when embodied in *has built*, as active, since its analogue, embodied in *has been built*, is the exclusively passive *been built*. Besides this, *has been* + *built* would signify something like *has existed, built*,\* which is plainly neuter. We are debarred, therefore, from such an analysis; and, by parity of reasoning, we may not resolve *is being built* into *is being* + *built*. It must have been an inspiration of analogy, felt or unfelt, that suggested the form I am discussing. *Is being* + *built*, as it can mean, pretty nearly, only *exists, built*, would never have been proposed as adequate to convey any but a neuter sense; whereas it was perfectly natural for a person aiming to express a passive sense to prefix *is* to the passive concretion *being built*.†

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\* "I express myself in this manner because I distinguish between *be* and *exist*."

† "Samuel Richardson writes: 'Jenny, who attends me here, has

"The analogical justification of *is being built* which I have brought forward is so obvious that, as it occurred to myself more than twenty years ago, so it must have occurred spontaneously to hundreds besides. It is very singular that those who, like Mr. Marsh and Mr. White, have pondered long and painfully over locutions typified by *is being built*, should have missed the real ground of their grammatical defensibleness, and should have warmed themselves, in their opposition to them, into uttering opinions which no calm judgment can accept.

"'One who *is being beaten*' is, to Archbishop Whately, 'uncouth English.' "'The bridge *is being built*," and other phrases of the like kind, have pained the eye' of Mr. David Booth. Such phrases, according to Mr. M. Harrison, 'are not English.' To Prof. J. W. Gibbs 'this mode of expression . . . appears formal and pedantic'; and 'the easy and natural expression is "*The house is building.*"'\* In all this little or nothing is discernible beyond sheer prejudice, the prejudice of those who resolve to take their stand against an innovation, regardless of its utility, and who are ready to find an argument against it in any random epithet of disparagement provoked by unreasoning aversion. And the more recent denouncers in the same line have no more reason on their side than their elder brethren.

"In Mr. Marsh's estimation, *is being built* illustrates 'corruption of language'; it is 'clumsy and unidiomatic';

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more than once hinted to me that Miss Jervis loves to sit up late, either reading or *being read to* by Anne, who, though she reads well, is not fond of the task.'—Sir Charles Grandison, vol. iii, p. 46 (ed. 1754).

"The transition is very slight by which we pass from 'sits being read to' to 'is being read to.'"

\* "I am here indebted to the last edition of Dr. Worcester's Dictionary, preface, p. xxxix."

it is 'at best but a philological coxcombry'; it 'is an awkward neologism, which neither convenience, intelligibility, nor syntactical congruity demands, and the use of which ought therefore to be discountenanced as an attempt at the artificial improvement of the language in a point which needed no amendment.' Again: 'To reject *'is building* in favor of the modern phrase 'is to violate the laws of language by an arbitrary change; and in this particular case the proposed substitute is at war with the genius of the English tongue.' Mr. Marsh seems to have fancied that wherever he points out a beauty in *is building*, he points out, inclusively, a blemish in *is being built*.

"The fervor and feeling with which Mr. White advances to the charge are altogether tropical. 'The full absurdity of this phrase, the essence of its nonsense, seems not to have been hitherto pointed out.' It is not 'consistent with reason'; and it is not 'conformed to the normal development of the language.' It is 'a monstrosity, the illogical, confusing, inaccurate, unidiomatic character of which I have at some length, but yet imperfectly, set forth.' Finally, 'In fact it means nothing, and is the most incongruous combination of words and ideas that ever attained respectable usage in any civilized language.' These be 'prave 'ords'; and it seems a pity that so much sterling vituperative ammunition should be expended in vain. And that it is so expended thinks Mr. White himself; for, though passing sentence in the spirit of a Jeffreys, he is not really on the judgment-seat, but on the lowest hassock of despair. As concerns the mode of expression exemplified by *is being built*, he owns that 'to check its diffusion would be a hopeless undertaking.' If so, why not reserve himself for service against some evil not avowedly beyond remedy?



"Again we read: 'Some precise and feeble-minded soul, having been taught that there is a passive voice in English, and that, for instance, *building* is an active participle, and *builded* or *built* a passive, felt conscientious scruples at saying "The house *is building*." For what could the house build?' As children say at play, Mr. White burns here. If it had occurred to him that the 'conscientious scruples' of his hypothetical, 'precise, and feeble-minded soul' were roused by *been built*, not by *built*, I suspect his chapter on *is being built* would have been much shorter than it is at present, and very different. 'The fatal absurdity in this phrase consists,' he tells us, 'in the combination of *is* with *being*; in the making of the verb *to be* a supplement, or, in grammarians' phrase, an auxiliary to itself—an absurdity so palpable, so monstrous, so ridiculous, that it should need only to be pointed out to be scouted.'\* Lastly, 'The question is thus narrowed simply to this, Does *to be being* (*esse ens*) mean anything more or other than *to be*?'

"Having convicted Mr. White of a mistaken analysis, I am not concerned with the observations which he founds on his mistake. However, even if his analysis had been correct, some of his arguments would avail him nothing. For instance, *is being built*, on his understanding of it, that is to say, *is being* + *built*, he represents by *ens ædificatus est*, as 'the supposed corresponding Latin phrase.'† The Latin

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\* "'Words and their Uses,' p. 353."

† "'*It is being* is simply equal to *it is*. And, in the supposed corresponding Latin phrases, *ens factus est*, *ens ædificatus est* (the obsolescence of *ens* as a participle being granted), the monstrosity is not in the use of *ens* with *factus*, but in that of *ens* with *est*. The absurdity is, in Latin, just what it is in English, the use of *is* with *being*, the making of the verb *to be* a complement to itself.'—*Ibid.*, pp. 354, 355.

"Apparently Mr. White recognizes no more difference between *sub-*

is illegitimate, and he infers that therefore the English is the same. But *ædificans est*, a translation, on the model which he offers, of the active *is building*, is quite as illegitimate as *ens ædificatus est*. By parity of *non-sequitur*, we are therefore to surrender the active *is building*. Assume that a phrase in a given language is indefensible unless it has its counterpart in some other language; from the very conception and definition of an idiom every idiom is illegitimate.

"I now pass to another point. '*To be and to exist are*,' to Mr. White's apprehension, 'perfect synonyms, or more nearly perfect, perhaps, than any two verbs in the language. In some of their meanings there is a shade of difference, but in others there is none whatever; and the latter are those which serve our present purpose. When we say, "He, *being* forewarned of danger, fled," we say, "He, *existing* forewarned of danger, fled." When we say that a thing *is* done, we say that it *exists* done. . . . *Is being done* is simply *exists existing done*.' But, since *is* and *exists* are equipollent, and so *being* and *existing*, *is being* is the same as the unimpeachable *is existing*. Q. *non E. D. Is existing* ought, of course, to be no less objectionable to Mr. White than *is being*. Just as absurd, too, should he reckon the Italian *sono stato, era stato, sia stato, fossi stato, saro stato, sarci stato, essere stato, and essendo stato*. For in Italian both *essere* and *stare* are required to make up the verb substantive, as in Latin both *esse* and the offspring of *fuere* are required; and *stare*, primarily 'to stand,' is modified into a true auxiliary. The alleged 'full absurdity of this phrase,' to wit, *is being built*, 'the essence of its nonsense,' vanishes thus into thin air. So I was about to comment bluntly, not

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*plement and complement* than he recognizes between *be* and *exist*. See the extract I have made above, from p. 353."

forgetting to regret that any gentleman's cultivation of logic should fructify in the shape of irrepressible tendencies to suicide. But this would be precipitate. Agreeably to one of Mr. White's judicial placita, which I make no apology for citing twice, 'no man who has preserved all his senses will doubt for a moment that "to exist a mastiff or a mule" is absolutely the same as "to be a mastiff or a mule."' Declining to admit their identity, I have not preserved all my senses; and, accordingly—though it may be in me the very superfetation of lunacy—I would caution the reader to keep a sharp eye on my arguments, hereabouts particularly. The Cretan who, in declaring all Cretans to be liars, left the question of his veracity doubtful to all eternity, fell into a pit of his own digging. Not unlike the unfortunate Cretan, Mr. White has tumbled headlong into his own snare. It was, for the rest, entirely unavailing that he insisted on the insanity of those who should gainsay his fundamental postulate. Sanity, of a crude sort, may accept it; and sanity may put it to a use other than its propounder's.

"Mr. Marsh, after setting forth the all-sufficiency of *is building*, in the passive sense, goes on to say: 'The reformers who object to the phrase I am defending must, in consistency, employ the proposed substitute with all passive participles, and in other tenses as well as the present. They must say, therefore, "The subscription paper *is being missed*, but I know that a considerable sum *is being wanted* to make up the amount"; "the great Victoria Bridge *has been being built* more than two years"; "when I reach London, the ship Leviathan *will be being built*"; "if my orders had been followed, the coat *would have been being made yesterday*"; "if the house *had then been being built*, the mortar *would have been being mixed*."' We may reply that, while

awkward instances of the old form are most abundant in our literature, there is no fear that the repulsive elaborations which have been worked out in ridicule of the new forms will prove to have been anticipations of future usage. There was a time when, as to their adverbs, people compared them, to a large extent, with *-er* and *-est*, or with *more* and *most*, just as their ear or pleasure dictated. They wrote *plainlier* and *plainliest*, or *more plainly* and *most plainly*; and some adverbs, as *early*, *late*, *often*, *seldom*, and *soon*, we still compare in a way now become anomalous. And as our forefathers treated their adverbs we still treat many adjectives. Furthermore, *obligingness*, *preparedness*, and *designedly* seem quite natural; yet we do not feel that they authorize us to talk of 'the *seeingness* of the eye,' 'the *understoodness* of a sentence,' or of 'a statement *acknowledgedly* correct.' 'The now too notorious fact' is tolerable; but 'the never to be sufficiently execrated monster Bonaparte' is intolerable. The sun may be *shorn* of his splendor; but we do not allow cloudy weather to *shear* him of it. How, then, can any one claim that a man who prefers to say *is being built* should say *has been being built*? Are not awkward instances of the old form, typified by *is building*, as easily to be picked out of extant literature as such instances of the new form, likely ever to be used, are to be invented? And 'the reformers' have not forsworn their ears. Mr. Marsh, at p. 135 of his admirable Lectures, lays down that 'the adjective *reliable*, in the sense of *worthy of confidence*, is altogether unidiomatic'; and yet, at p. 112, he writes '*reliable* evidence.' Again, at p. 396 of the same work, he rules that *whose*, in 'I passed a house *whose* windows were open,' is 'by no means yet fully established'; and at p. 145 of his very learned *Man and Nature* he writes 'a quadrangular pyramid, the perpendicular

of *whose* sides,' etc. Really, if his own judgments sit so very loose on his practical conscience, we may, without being chargeable with exaction, ask of him to relax a little the rigor of his requirements at the hands of his neighbors.

"Beckford's Lisbon fortune-teller, before had into court, was '*dragging* into light,' and, perchance, '*was taking* to account.' Many moderns would say and write '*being dragged* into light,' and '*was being taken* to account.' But, if we are to trust the conservative critics, in comparison with expressions of the former pattern, those of the latter are 'uncouth,' 'clumsy,' 'awkward neologisms,' 'philological coxcombs,' 'formal and pedantic,' 'incongruous and ridiculous forms of speech,' 'illogical, confusing, inaccurate monstrosities.' Moreover, they are neither 'consistent with reason' nor 'conformed to the normal development of the language'; they are 'at war with the genius of the English tongue'; they are 'unidiomatic'; they are 'not English.' In passing, if Mr. Marsh will so define the term *unidiomatic* as to evince that it has any applicability to the case in hand, or if he will arrest and photograph 'the genius of the English tongue,' so that we may know the original when we meet with it, he will confer a public favor. And now I submit for consideration whether the sole strength of those who decry *is being built* and its congeners does not consist in their talent for calling hard names. If they have not an uneasy subconsciousness that their cause is weak, they would at least do well in eschewing the violence to which, for want of something better, the advocates of weak causes proverbially resort.

"I once had a friend who, for some microscopic penumbra of heresy, was charged, in the words of his accuser, with 'as near an approach to the sin against the Holy Ghost as is practicable to human infirmity.' Similarly, on

one view, the feeble potencies of philological turpitude seem to have exhibited their most consummate realization in engendering *is being built*. The supposed enormity perpetrated in its production, provided it had fallen within the sphere of ethics, would, at the least, have ranked with its denunciators as a brand-new exemplification of total depravity. But, after all, what incontestable defect in it has any one succeeded in demonstrating? Mr. White, in opposing to the expression objections based on an erroneous analysis, simply lays a phantom of his own evoking; and, so far as I am informed, other impugnors of *is being built* have absolutely no argument whatever against it over and beyond their repugnance to novelty. Subjected to a little untroubled contemplation, it would, I am confident, have ceased long ago to be matter of controversy; but the dust of prejudice and passion, which so distempers the intellectual vision of theologians and politicians, is seen to make, with ruthless impartiality, no exception of the perspicacity of philologists.

"Prior to the evolution of *is being built* and *was being built*, we possessed no discriminate equivalents to *ædificatur* and *ædificabatur*; *is built* and *was built*, by which they were rendered, corresponding exactly to *ædificatus est* and *ædificatus erat*. *Cum ædificaretur* was to us the same as *ædificabatur*. On the wealth of the Greek in expressions of imperfect passive I need not dwell. With rare exceptions, the Romans were satisfied with the present-imperfect and the past-imperfect; and we, on the comparatively few occasions which present themselves for expressing other imperfects, shall be sure to have recourse to the old forms rather than to the new, or else to use periphrases.\* The

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\* "But those things which, *being not now doing*, or having not yet been done, have a natural aptitude to exist hereafter, may be prop-

purists may, accordingly, dismiss their apprehensions, especially as the neoterists have clearly a keener horror of phraseological ungainliness than themselves. One may have no hesitation about saying 'the house *is being built*,' and may yet recoil from saying that 'it *should have been being built* last Christmas'; and the same person—just as, provided he did not feel a harshness, inadequacy, and ambiguity in the passive 'the house *is building*,' he would use the expression—will, more likely than not, elect *is in preparation* preferentially to *is being prepared*. If there are any who, in their zealotry for the congruous, choose to adhere to the new form in its entire range of exchangeability for the old, let it be hoped that they will find, in Mr. Marsh's speculative approbation of consistency, full amends for the discomfort of encountering smiles or frowns. At the same time, let them be mindful of the career of Mr. White, with his black flag and no quarter. The dead Polonius was, in Hamlet's phrase, at supper, 'not where he eats, but where he *is eaten*.' Shakespeare, to Mr. White's thinking, in this wise expressed himself at the best, and deserves not only admiration therefor, but to be imitated. 'While the ark *was built*,' 'while the ark *was prepared*,' writes Mr. White himself.\* Shakespeare is commended for his ambiguous *is eaten*, though *in eating* or *an eating* would have been not only correct in his day, but, where they would have come in his sentence, univocal. With equal reason a man would be entitled to commendation for tearing his mutton-chops with his fingers, when he might cut them up with a knife

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erly said to appertain to the future.'—Harris's *Hermes*, Book I, chap. viii (p. 155, foot-note, ed. 1771). For Harris's *being not now doing*, which is to translate *μὴ γινόμενα*, the modern school, if they pursued uniformity with more of fidelity than of taste, would have to put *being not now being done*. There is not much to choose between the two."

\* "' Words and their Uses,' p. 343."

and fork. '*Is eaten*,' says Mr. White, 'does not mean *has been eaten*.' Very true; but a continuous unfinished passion—Polonius's still undergoing manducation, to speak Johnsonese—was in Shakespeare's mind; and his words describe a passion no longer in generation. The King of Denmark's lord chamberlain had no precedent in Herod, when '*he was eaten* of worms'; the original, *γενόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος*, yielding, but for its participle, 'he became worm-eaten.'

"Having now done with Mr. White, I am anxious, before taking leave of him, to record, with all emphasis, that it would be the grossest injustice to write of his elegant Life and Genius of Shakespeare, a book which does credit to American literature, in the tone which I have found unavoidable in dealing with his Words and their Uses."

"A reader in the Hudson Register asks, 'Which is grammatically correct: to say "Boston is burning," or "Boston is being burnt,"; "the street is paving," or "the street is being paved."?' The editor favors the opinion that 'is being burnt' and 'is being paved' are proper. There are good opinions to support the Register in its astute opinion. Suppose you were talking politics, and your friend should say, 'Greeley is beating,' or 'Greeley is being beaten.' Now it may not make much difference to the world, but it is a matter that materially affects Mr. Greeley. Again, suppose you wish to express another kind of an idea, would you say, for instance, 'Johnny is spanking,' or 'Johnny is being spanked'? The difference to you may again seem immaterial, but it is a matter of considerable importance to Johnny; and it is probable that if any choice were given him, he would suddenly select the former alternative. Again, you say, 'The missionary is eating,' which is very pleasant for the missionary; but by a little change of syntax, if you say 'The



missionary is being eaten,' you yourself are not affected, but the missionary experiences a painful sensation."—N. Y. Com. Adv.

*Is growing, was growing*, indicate an activity from within ; as, the tree *is growing* (from its own internal forces) ; *is being grown, was being grown*, the activity of some agent from without ; as, the plant *is being grown* (by the gardener). So also, and strikingly, *is bleeding* (as from a wound) and *is being bled* (as by a surgeon).—Standard Dictionary.

The student of English that has honestly weighed the arguments on both sides of the question must, I believe, be of opinion that our language is the richer for having two forms for expressing the progressive passive. Further, he must, I believe, be of opinion that in very many cases he conforms to the most approved usage of our time by employing the old form ; that, however, if he were to employ the old form in all cases, his meaning would sometimes be uncertain.

**It.** Cobbett discourses of this little neuter pronoun in this wise : "The word *it* is the greatest troubler that I know of in language. It is so small and so convenient that few are careful enough in using it. Writers seldom spare this word. Whenever they are at a loss for either a nominative or an objective to their sentence, they, without any kind of ceremony, clap in an *it*. A very remarkable instance of this pressing of poor *it* into actual service, contrary to the laws of grammar and of sense, occurs in a piece of composition, where we might, with justice, insist on correctness. This piece is on the subject of grammar ; it is a piece written by a *Doctor of Divinity* and read by him to students in grammar and language in an academy ; and the very sentence that I am now about to quote is

selected by the author of a grammar as testimony of high authority in favor of the excellence of his work. Surely, if correctness be ever to be expected, it must be in a case like this. I allude to two sentences in the Charge of the Reverend Doctor Abercrombie to the Senior Class of the Philadelphia Academy, published in 1806; which sentences have been selected and published by Mr. Lindley Murray as a testimonial of the *merits* of his grammar; and which sentences are by Mr. Murray given to us in the following words: 'The unwearied exertions of this gentleman *have* done more toward elucidating the obscurities and embellishing the structure of our language than any *other writer* on the subject. *Such a work* has long been wanted, and from the success with which *it* is executed, can not be too highly appreciated.'

"As in the learned doctor's opinion obscurities can be elucidated, and as in the same opinion Mr. Murray is an able hand at this kind of work, it would not be amiss were the grammarian to try his skill upon this article from the hand of his dignified eulogist; for here is, if one may use the expression, a constellation of obscurities. Our poor oppressed *it*, which we find forced into the doctor's service in the second sentence, relates to '*such a work*,' though this work is nothing that has an existence, notwithstanding it is said to be '*executed*.' In the first sentence, the '*exertions*' become, all of a sudden, a '*writer*'; the *exertions* have done more than '*any other writer*'; for, mind you, it is not the *gentleman* that has done anything; it is '*the exertions*' that *have* done what is said to be done. The word *gentleman* is in the possessive case, and has nothing to do with the action of the sentence. Let us give the sentence a turn, and the doctor and the grammarian will hear how it will sound. 'This gentleman's *exertions* have done

more than any *other writer*.' This is on a level with 'This gentleman's *dog* has killed more hares than any *other sportsman*.' No doubt Doctor Abercrombie *meant* to say, 'The exertions of this gentleman have done more *than those* of any other writer. Such a work as this gentleman's has long been wanted; his work, seeing the successful manner of its execution, can not be too highly commended. *Meant!* No doubt at all of that! And when we hear a Hampshire plowboy say, 'Poll Cherrycheek have giv'd a thick handkecher,' we know very well that he *means* to say, 'Poll Cherrycheek has given me this handkerchief'; and yet we are too apt to *laugh at him* and to call him *ignorant*; which is wrong, because he has no pretensions to a knowledge of grammar, and he may be very skillful as a plowboy. However, we will not laugh at Doctor Abercrombie, whom I knew, many years ago, for a very kind and worthy man. But if we may, in any case, be allowed to laugh at the ignorance of our fellow-creatures, that case certainly does arise when we see a professed grammarian, the author of voluminous precepts and examples on the subject of grammar, producing, in imitation of the possessors of valuable medical secrets, testimonials vouching for the efficacy of his literary panacea, and when, in those testimonials, we find most flagrant instances of bad grammar.

"However, my dear James, let this strong and striking instance of the misuse of the word *it* serve you in the way of caution. Never put an *it* upon paper without thinking well of what you are about. When I see many *its* in a page I always tremble for the writer."

**It goes without saying.** Not English; simply a literal translation of the French idiom *Il va sans dire*, meaning *It is self-evident*, which is the locution we should use when we speak or write English.

**Jeopardize.** This is a modern word that we could easily do without, as it means neither more nor less than its venerable progenitor *to jeopard*, which is preferred by careful writers.

**Jug.** What the American calls a *pitcher* the Englishman calls a *jug*.

"Our American friend," says an English writer, "complains of our continual misuse of 'jug' for 'pitcher,' saying that the practice is of very recent origin, and that the word 'jug' is comparatively new. The word is an old one, and, if not found in the English Bible, has a pedigree of respectable antiquity; nor are we disposed to object to it. Only think of an English lady speaking of her 'cream pitcher'!"

And an American woman—what an Anglomaniac she'd have to be to call a pitcher of any sort a jug!

**Just going to.** Instead of "I am *just going to go*," it is better to say, "I am just *about to go*."

**Just next.** "Is not '*next*' sufficiently definite? This is a single example out of scores noticed every day showing the endeavors of newspaper writers to strengthen what they say."—N. C. Advocate.

**Kids.** It is better usage to speak of one's *gloves* than of one's *kids*. When silk gloves are meant, we never speak of them as *silks*.

**Kind.** See POLITE.

**Kind of.** We say properly, "What kind of man is he?" and not "What kind of *a* man is he?" The *a* in such sentences is a superfluity.

**Kinsman.** *Kinship* is defined as the state of being related by blood, hence relatives by marriage are not properly *kinsmen*. And yet it would seem that *kinsfolk* may be used in speaking of all who are related by family ties—all relatives, whether related by blood or by marriage. The

term *kinsman* is to be preferred to either *relative*, *relation*, or *connection*.

**Knights Templars.** The name of this ancient body has been adopted by a branch of the Masonic fraternity, but in a perverted form—*Knights Templar*; and this form is commonly seen in print, whether referring to the old knights or to their modern imitators. This doubtless is due to the erroneous impression that *Templar* is an adjective, and so can not take the plural form; while in fact it is a case of two nouns in apposition—a double designation—meaning Knights of the order of Templars. Hence the plural should be *Knights Templars*, and not *Knights Templar*. Members of the contemporaneous order of St. John of Jerusalem were commonly called Knights Hospitallers.

**Lady.** To use the term *lady*, whether in the singular or in the plural, simply to designate the sex, is in the worst possible taste. There is a kind of pin-feather gentility that seems to have a settled aversion to using the terms *man* and *woman*. Gentlemen and ladies establish their claims to being called such by their bearing, and not by arrogating to themselves, *even indirectly*, the titles. In England, the title *lady* is properly correlative to *lord*; but there, as in this country, it is used as a term of complaisance, and is appropriately applied to women whose lives are exemplary, and who have received that school and home education that enables them to appear to advantage in the better circles of society. Such expressions as "She is a fine *lady*, a clever *lady*, a well-dressed *lady*, a good *lady*, a modest *lady*, a charitable *lady*, an amiable *lady*, a handsome *lady*, a fascinating *lady*," and the like, are studiously avoided by persons of refinement. *Ladies* say "We *women*, the *women* of America, *women's* apparel," and so on; *vulgar* women talk about

"Us *ladies*, the *ladies* of America, *ladies'* apparel," and so on. If a woman of culture and refinement—in short, a lady—is compelled from any cause soever to work in a store, she is quite content to be called a sales-*woman*; not so, however, with your young woman who, being in a store, is in a better position than ever before. She—Heaven bless her!—seethes with indignation if she is not called a sales-*lady*. Lady is often the proper term to use, and then it would be very improper to use any other term; but it is very certain that the terms *lady* and *gentleman* are least used by those persons who are most worthy of being designated by them. With a nice discrimination worthy of special notice, one of our daily papers recently said: "Miss Jennie Halstead, daughter of the proprietor of the Cincinnati Commercial, is one of the most brilliant young *women* in Ohio."

In a late number of the London Queen was the following: "The terms *ladies* and *gentlemen* become in themselves vulgarisms when misapplied, and the improper application of the wrong term at the wrong time makes all the difference in the world to ears polite. Thus, calling a man a *gentleman* when he should be called a *man*, or speaking of a man as a *man* when he should be spoken of as a *gentleman*; or alluding to a lady as a *woman* when she should be alluded to as a *lady*, or speaking of a woman as a *lady* when she should properly be termed a *woman*. Tact and a sense of the fitness of things decide these points, there being no fixed rule to go upon to determine when a man is a *man* or when he is a *gentleman*; and, although he is far oftener termed the one than the other, he does not thereby lose his attributes of a gentleman. In common parlance, a man is always a *man* to a man, and never a *gentleman*; to a woman, he is occasionally a *man* and occasionally a *gentle-*

*man* ; but a man would far oftener term a woman a *woman* than he would term her a *lady*. When a man makes use of an adjective in speaking of a lady, he almost invariably calls her a *woman*. Thus he would say, 'I met a rather agreeable *woman* at dinner last night'; but he would *not* say, 'I met an agreeable *lady*'; but he might say, 'A *lady*, a friend of mine, told me,' etc., when he would *not* say, 'A *woman*, a friend of mine, told me,' etc. Again, a man would say, 'Which of the *ladies* did you take in to dinner?' He would certainly not say, 'Which of the *women*,' etc.

"Speaking of people *en masse*, it would be to belong to a very advanced school to refer to them in conversation as 'men and women,' while it would be al. but vulgar to style them 'ladies and gentlemen,' the compromise between the two being to speak of them as 'ladies and men.' Thus a lady would say, 'I have asked two or three ladies and several men'; she would not say, 'I have asked several men and women'; neither would she say, 'I have asked several ladies and gentlemen.' And, speaking of numbers, it would be very usual to say, 'There were a great many ladies, and but very few men present,' or, 'The ladies were in the majority, so few men being present.' Again, a lady would not say, 'I expect two or three men,' but she would say, 'I expect two or three gentlemen.' When people are on ceremony with each other [one another], they might, perhaps, in speaking of a man, call him a *gentleman*; but, otherwise, it would be more usual to speak of him as a *man*. Ladies, when speaking of each other [one another], usually employ the term *woman* in preference to that of *lady*. Thus they would say, 'She is a very good-natured *woman*,' 'What sort of a *woman* is she?' the term *lady* being entirely out of place under such circumstances. Again, the term young *lady* gives place as far as possible to the term *girl*, although

it greatly depends upon the amount of intimacy existing as to which term is employed."

"Let the word *lady* go, and let ladylikeness be cultivated and intensified under the name of *woman*.

"*Man* and *woman* are much more sonorous, humane, and desirable terms than *gentleman* and *lady*. It may also be said that in nine cases out of ten their use is much more gentlemanly and ladylike."—N. Y. Sun, Aug. 14, 1887.

"There's one good thing about the new woman—she doesn't call herself the new lady."—Albany Press-Knickerbocker.

**Last—Latter.** *Last* should not be used of two only, since *last* is a superlative; and *latter* should not be used of more than two, since *latter* is a comparative.

**Lay—Lie.** Errors are frequent in the use of these two irregular verbs. *Lay* is often used for *lie*, and *lie* is sometimes used for *lay*. This confusion in their use is due, in some measure, doubtless, to the circumstance that *lay* appears in both verbs, it being the imperfect tense of *to lie*. We say, "A mason *lays* bricks," "A ship *lies* at anchor," etc.; "I must *lie* down"; "I must *lay* myself down"; "I must *lay* this book on the table"; "He *lies* on the grass"; "He *lays* his plans well"; "He *lay* on the grass"; "He *laid* it away"; "He has *lain* in bed long enough"; "He has *laid up* some money"; "He is *laying* out the grounds"; "Ships *lie* at the wharf"; "Hens *lay* eggs"; "The ship *lay* at anchor"; "The hen *laid* an egg." It will be seen that *lay* always expresses transitive action, and that *lie* expresses rest.

"Here *lies* our sovereign lord, the king,

Whose word no man relies on;

He never says a foolish thing,

Nor ever does a wise one."



—Written on the bedchamber door of Charles II, by the Earl of Rochester.

“Dapple had to *lay* [*lie*] down on all fours before the lad could bestride him.”

“The Waterloo man was represented by a child of three—a Martin, of course—who *laid* [*lay*] down in the gutter.”

“The look of immovable endurance that *underlaid* [*underlay*] her expression.”

“Those sterling qualities of generosity and discretion that *underlaid* [*underlay*] their more prominent attractions.”

“No beds whatever, and for a whole week I never took off my clothes, but *laid* [*lay*] down in them wrapped in my cloak.”

**Learn.** Long ago this verb was used as a synonym of *teach*, but in this sense it is now obsolete. To *teach* is to give instruction; to *learn* is to take instruction. “I will *learn*, if you will *teach* me.” See **TEACH**.

**Leave.** There are grammarians who insist that this verb should not be used without an object; as, for example, it is used in such sentences as, “When do you leave?” “I leave to-morrow.” The object of the verb—home, town, or whatever it may be—is, of course, understood; but this, say these gentlemen, is not permissible. On this point opinions will, I think, differ; they will, however, not differ with regard to the vulgarity of using *leave* in the sense of *let*; thus, “*Leave* me be”; “*Leave* it alone”; “*Leave* her be—don’t bother her”; “*Leave* me see it.”

Sometimes misused in the sense of *allow*.

“If that system were *left* [*allowed*] to continue, after ten years or so no party would dare to suggest the maintenance of any tariff.”—N. Y. Sun.

**Lend.** See **LOAN**.

**Length—Side—Endways.** The form preferred is *lengthwise*, etc.

**Lengthened.** Sometimes misused for *long*, though it does not mean *long* any more than *strengthened* means *strong* or *heightened* means *high*.

"For a *lengthened* [long] period the means which [that] I could with propriety devote to the purchase [purchasing, or, better, buying] of books were very limited."

"He astonished a literary friend who had accompanied him by repeating a *lengthened* [long] passage from one of the Eclogues of Virgil."

"Beguile the heavy hour with [by] studying the faces of [in] the congregation below, or [by] watching for the last leaf of the *lengthening* sermon."

**Lengthy.** This word is of comparatively recent origin, and, though it is said to be an Americanism, it is a good deal used in England. The most careful writers, however, both here and elsewhere, prefer the word *long*: "a *long* discussion," "a *long* discourse," etc.

**Leniency.** Mr. Gould calls this word and *lenience* "two philological abortions." *Lenity* is undoubtedly the proper word to use, though both Webster and Worcester do recognize *leniency* and *lenience*.

The Standard Dictionary (1895) recognizes *leniency*, but not *lenience*.

**Less.** This word is much used instead of *fewer*. *Less* relates to quantity; *fewer* to number. Instead of, "There were not *less* than twenty persons present," we should say, "There were not *fewer* than twenty persons present."

"The neat edition published by King contains no less [fewer] than sixty of the popular songs known chiefly to college boys," etc.—N. Y. Tribune.

**Lesser.** This form of the comparative of *little* is ac-

counted a corruption of *less*. It may, however, be used instead of *less* with propriety in verse, and also, in some cases, in prose. We may say, for example, "Of two evils choose the *less*," or "the *lesser*." The latter form, in sentences like this, is the more euphonious; and the question of euphony is one that a writer should never lose sight of.

**Liabie.** Richard Grant White, in inveighing against the misuse of *liable*, cites the example of a member from a rural district who called out to a man that he met in the village, where he was in the habit of making little purchases: "I say, mister, kin yer tell me whar I'd be *li'ble* [likely] to find some beans?"

"Would he not be *liable* [likely] to neglect the most important mechanism for its apparent insignificance?" See also APT.

**Like, To.** See LOVE.

**Lie.** See LAY.

**Like—As.** Both these words express similarity; *like* (adjective) comparing things, *as* (adverb) comparing action, existence, or quality. *Like* is followed by an object only, and does not admit of a verb in the same construction. *As* must be followed by a verb expressed or understood. We say, "He looks *like* his brother," or "He looks *as* his brother *looks*." "Do *as* I do," not "*like* I do." "You must speak *as* James does [or speaks]," not "*like* James does." "He died *as* he had lived—*like* a dog." "It is *as* blue *as* indigo"—i. e., "as indigo is."

"A nation must laugh, and there is all the difference whether it laughs *like* a satyr, or *like* [as] those bitter fish-women did [laughed] in France at blood and slaughter, or *like* [as] we have laughed under Punch's auspices for many years."

*Like* is sometimes improperly used in the sense of *as*

*though*, thus: "It looks *like* it was caused," etc. "It looks *like* they must pay," etc.

**Likely.** See APT.

**Limited.** Sometimes used when *low*, *small*, *slight*, or *slender* would be the proper word.

"The cost of the volume [book?] was formerly five shillings. It is now published at the *limited* [low] price of one shilling."

"If we may found [?] an opinion on a *limited* [slight] acquaintance with the writings of Tieck."

It is better to say, "A man of *small* or *slender* means," than to say, "A man of *limited* means"; yet one might say very properly, "My means are too *limited* to justify the outlay."

**Lit.** This form of the past participle of the verb *to light* is now obsolete. "Have you *lighted* the fire?" "The gas is *lighted*." *Het* for *heated* is a similar, but a much greater, vulgarism.

**Loan—Lend.** There are those who contend that there is no such verb as *to loan*, although it has been found in our literature for more than three hundred years. Whether there is properly such a verb or not, it is quite certain that it is only those having a vulgar *penchant* for big words that will prefer it to its synonym, *lend*. Better far to say, "*Lend* me your umbrella" than "*Loan* me your umbrella."

"To *loan*, as a verb, has to us a strange sound."—E. A. Freeman.

**Locate—Settle.** The use of the verb *to locate* in the sense of *to settle* is said to be an Americanism. Although the dictionaries recognize *to locate* as a neuter verb, as such it is marked "rarely used," and, in the sense of *to settle*, it is among the vulgarisms that careful speakers and writers are studious to avoid. A man *settles*, not *locates*, in Nebraska.

"Where do you intend to *settle*?" not *locate*. See also SETTLE.

**Loggerheads.** "In the meantime France is at *loggerheads internally*."—New York Herald, April 29, 1881. *Loggerheads internally*?!

This, of course, is reportorial, not editorial, English.

**Looks beautifully.** It is sometimes interesting to note the difference between *vulgar* bad grammar and *genteel* bad grammar, or, more properly, between nonpainstaking and painstaking bad grammar. The former uses, for example, adjectives instead of adverbs; the latter uses adverbs instead of adjectives. The former says, "This bonnet is trimmed *shocking*"; the latter says, "This bonnet looks *shockingly*." In the first sentence the epithet qualifies the verb *is trimmed*, and consequently should have its adverbial form—*shockingly*; in the second sentence the epithet qualifies the *appearance* (a noun) of the bonnet, and consequently should have its adjectival form—*shocking*. The second sentence means to say, "This bonnet presents a shocking appearance." The bonnet certainly does not really *look*; it is *looked at*, and to the *looker* its appearance is *shocking*. So we say, in like manner, of a person, that he or she looks *sweet*, or *charming*, or *beautiful*, or *handsome*, or *horrid*, or *graceful*, or *timid*, and so on, always using an adjective. "Miss Coghlan, as Lady Teazle, looked *charmingly*." The grammar of the New York Herald would not have been any more incorrect if it had said that Miss Coghlan looked *gladly*, or *sadly*, or *madly*, or *delightedly*, or *pleasedly*. A person may look *sick* or *sickly*, but in both cases the qualifying word is an adjective. The verbs to *smell*, to *feel*, to *sound*, to *appear*, and to *stand* are also found in sentences in which the qualifying word must be an adjective, and not an adverb. We say, for example,

"The rose smells *sweet*"; "The butter smells *good*, or *bad*, or *fresh*"; "I feel *glad*, or *sad*, or *bad*, or *despondent*, or *annoyed*, or *nervous*"; "This construction sounds *harsh*"; "How *delightful* the country appears!"

On the other hand, to *look*, to *feel*, to *smell*, to *sound*, and to *appear* are found in sentences where the qualifying word must be an adverb; thus, "He feels his loss *keenly*"; "The king looked *graciously* on her"; "I smell it *faintly*." We might also say, "He feels *sad* [adjective], because he feels his loss *keenly*" (adverb); "He appears *well*" (adverb).

The expression, "*She seemed confusedly, or timidly,*" is not a whit more incorrect than "*She looked beautifully, or charmingly.*" See ADJECTIVES.

**Lot—Lots.** Very inelegantly used for "a great many," "a great deal"; as, "They have *lots* of enemies," "We have *lots* of apples," "He had a *lot*, or *lots*, of trouble," "She gave us a *lot* of trouble," etc.

**Loud.** There are not a few who seem to think that *loud* can not be used as an adverb. It is quite as correct to say, "Do not talk so *loud*," as it is to say, "Do not talk in such a *loud* tone."

"The World of this town (London) has driven some of the American papers in Europe mad by its article on The American Girl, Uncivilized and Civilized. The former type is described as always talking *loudly* [loud] and [as being] always in haste," etc.—Corr. N. Y. Sun.

"It prevents me from hearing you, and you must therefore speak *more loudly* [louder]."

**Love—Like.** Men that are careful in selecting their words, and have not an undue leaning toward the superlative, *love* few things—their wives, their sweethearts, their kinsmen, truth, justice, and their country. We *like* ac-

quaintances, horses, flowers, pictures, good things to eat, and so on.

**Lovely.** A much-abused word. With some persons everything is *lovely*.

**Low-priced.** See CHEAP.

**Luggage—Baggage.** The former of these words is commonly used in Great Britain, the latter in America.

**Lunch.** This word, when used as a substantive, may at the best, be accounted an inelegant abbreviation of *luncheon*. The dictionaries barely recognize it. The proper phraseology to use is, "Have you *lunched*?" or, "Have you had your *luncheon*?" or, better, "Have you had *luncheon*?" as we may in most cases presuppose that the person addressed would hardly take anybody's else luncheon.

**Luxurious—Luxuriant.** The line is drawn much more sharply between these two words now than it was formerly. *Luxurious* was once used, to some extent at least, in the sense of *rank growth*, but now all careful writers and speakers use it in the sense of *indulging in*, or *delighting in*, *luxury*. We talk of a *luxurious* table, a *luxurious* liver, *luxurious* ease, *luxurious* freedom. *Luxuriant*, on the other hand, is restricted to the sense of *rank*, or *excessive*, growth or production; thus, *luxuriant* weeds, *luxuriant* foliage or branches, *luxuriant* growth.

"Prune the *luxuriant*, the uncouth refine,

But show no mercy to an empty line."—Pope.

**Mad.** Professor Richard A. Proctor, in a recent number of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, says: "The word *mad*, in America, seems nearly always to mean *angry*. For *mad*, as we use the word, Americans say *crazy*. Herein they have manifestly impaired the language." Have they?

“Now, in faith, Gratiano,  
 You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief;  
 An ’twere to me, I would [should] be *mad* at it.”

Merchant of Venice.

“And being exceedingly *mad* against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”—Acts xxvi, 11.

*Mad*, in the sense of *angry*, is less used now than formerly, and is least used in this sense by those who are accounted careful speakers. “He was very *angry*” is certainly preferable to “He was very *mad*.” In this sense *mad* may be said to be archaic.

**Make a visit.** We do not *make* visits; we *pay* them. “*Make* a visit,” according to Dr. Hall, whatever it once was, is no longer English.

**Malaria.** This word is not the name of a disease, as many persons seem to think, but of the *cause* of a disease, or perhaps of diseases. We do not suffer from *malaria*, but from the *effects* of malaria, which is a *noxious exhalation*, usually from marshy districts.

**Marry.** There has been some discussion, at one time and another, with regard to the use of this word. Is John Jones married *to* Sally Brown or *with* Sally Brown, or are they married to each other? Inasmuch as the woman loses her name in that of the man she is wedded to, and becomes a member of his family, not he of hers—inasmuch as, with few exceptions, it is her life that is merged in his—it would seem that, *properly*, Sally Brown is married *to* John Jones, and that this would be the proper way to make the announcement of their having been wedded, and not John Jones *to* Sally Brown.

There is also a difference of opinion as to whether the active or the passive form is preferable in referring to a person’s wedded state. In speaking definitely of the *act* of



marriage the passive form is necessarily used with reference to either spouse. "John Jones was married to Sally Brown on December 1, 1881"; not "John Jones *married* Sally Brown" on such a date, for (unless they were Quakers) some third person married him to her and her to him. But, in speaking definitely of the *fact* of marriage, the active form is a matter of course. "Whom did John Jones marry?" "He married Sally Brown." "John Jones, when he had sown his wild oats, married [married himself, as the French say] and settled down." *Got married* is a vulgarism.

**May.** In the sense of *can*, *may*, in a negative clause, has become obsolete. "Though we *may* say a horse, we *may* not say a ox." The first *may* here is permissible; not so, however, the second, which should be *can*.

*Can* always conveys the idea of ability; hence, when it is a question of simple permission, *may* should be used. "*May* I—not *can* I—have an apple?"

**Meat.** At the table we ask for and offer beef, mutton, veal, steak, turkey, duck, etc., and do not ask for nor offer *meat*, which, to say the least, is very inelegant. "Will you have [not take] another piece of *beef* [not of *the* beef]?" not, "Will you have another piece of *meat*?"

**Memorandum.** The plural is *memoranda*, except when the singular means a book; then the plural is *memorandums*.

**Mere.** This word is not infrequently misplaced, and sometimes, as in the following sentence, in consequence of being misplaced, it is changed to an adverb: "It is true of men as of God, that words *merely* meet with no response." What the writer evidently intended to say is, that *mere* words meet with no response.

The diction of none but painstakers is ever good.

**Merely.** Sometimes misused for *simply*. *Merely* means only, solely ; as, "We went *merely* (not simply) out of curiosity." "What you tell me is *simply* astounding."

**Metaphor.** An *implied* comparison is called a metaphor ; it is a more terse form of expression than the simile. Take, for example, this sentence from Spencer's *Philosophy of Style*: "As, in passing through the crystal, beams of white light are decomposed into the colors of the rainbow, so, in traversing the soul of the poet, the colorless rays of truth are transformed into brightly tinted poetry." Expressed in metaphors, this becomes: "The white light of truth, in traversing the many-sided, transparent soul of the poet, is refracted into iris-hued poetry."

Worcester's definition of a *metaphor* is: "A figure of speech founded on the resemblance which [that] one object is supposed to bear, in some respect, to another, or a figure by which a word is transferred from a subject to which it properly belongs to another, in such a manner that a *comparison is implied, though not formally expressed*; a comparison or simile comprised in a word ; as, 'Thy word is a *lamp* to my feet.'" A *metaphor* differs from a *simile* in being expressed without any sign of comparison ; thus, "the *silver moon*" is a *metaphor* ; "the moon is bright as silver" is a simile. Examples :

"But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased—  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow?"

"At length Erasmus

Stemmed the wild torrent of a barbarous age,  
And drove those holy Vandals off the stage."

"Censure is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent."

**Metonymy.** The rhetorical figure that puts the effect for the cause, the cause for the effect, the container for the thing contained, the sign, or symbol, for the thing signified, or the instrument for the agent, is called *metonymy*.

"One very common species of *metonymy* is when the badge is put for the office. Thus we say the *miter* for the priesthood; the *crown* for royalty; for military occupation we say the *sword*; and for the literary professions—those especially of theology, law, and physic—the common expression is the *gown*."—Campbell.

Dr. Quackenbos, in his *Course of Composition and Rhetoric*, says: "*Metonymy* is the exchange of names between things related. It is founded, not on resemblance, but on the relation of (1) Cause and effect; as, 'They have *Moses and the prophets*'—i. e., their writings; 'Gray hairs should be respected'—i. e., *old age*. (2) Progenitor and posterity; as, 'Hear, O Israel!'—i. e., *descendants of Israel*. (3) Subject and attribute; as, 'Youth and beauty shall be laid in dust'—i. e., *the young and beautiful*. (4) Place and inhabitant; as, 'What *land* is so barbarous as to allow this injustice?'—i. e., what *people*. (5) Container and thing contained; as, 'Our *ships* next opened fire'—i. e., our *sailors*. (6) Sign and thing signified; as, 'The *scepter* shall not depart from Judah'—i. e., *kingly power*. (7) Material and thing made of it; as, 'His *steel* gleamed on high'—i. e., his *sword*."

"Petitions having proved unsuccessful, it was determined to approach the throne more boldly."

**Middling.** Sometimes misused for *tolerably* or *fairly*. *Middling* can not properly be used as an adverb, hence we can not say a thing is "*middling good*," or that a thing was "*middling well*" done.

**Midst, The.** See IN OUR MIDST.

**Mighty.** Often used when *very* would be the proper word to use. Such expressions as *mighty* hard, *mighty* pretty, *mighty* well, and the like are not used by the careful.

**Mind.** This word is often inelegantly, if not absolutely incorrectly, used in the sense of *obey*. To *mind* is to attend to a thing so that it may not be forgotten. We should say, "Will you *obey* me?" not "Will you *mind* me?" "*Mind* what I say, and be sure you *obey* me."

**Mind—Capricious.** "Lord Salisbury's *mind* is *capricious*."—Tribune. See EQUANIMITY OF MIND.

**Misplaced Clauses.** In writing and speaking, it is as important to give each clause its proper place as it is to place the words properly. The following are a few instances of misplaced clauses and adjuncts: "All these circumstances brought close to us a state of things which [that] we never thought *to have witnessed* [to witness] in peaceful England. *In the sister island, indeed, we had read of such horrors*, but now they were brought home to our very household hearth."—Swift. Better: "We had read, indeed, of such horrors occurring in the sister island," etc.

"I shall have a comedy for you, in a season or two at farthest, that I believe will be worth your acceptance."—Goldsmith. Bettered: "In a season or two at farthest, I shall have a comedy for you that I believe will be worth your acceptance."

"This orthography is regarded as normal *in England*." What the writer intended was, "in England *as normal*"—a very different thought.

"The Normal School is a commodious building capable of accommodating three hundred students four stories high."

"The Moor, seizing a bolster boiling over with rage and jealousy, smothers her."

**Misplaced Words.** "Of all the faults to be found in writing," says Cobbett, "this is one of the most common, and perhaps it leads to the greatest number of misconceptions. All the words may be the proper words to be used upon the occasion, and yet, by a *misplacing* of a part of them, the meaning may be wholly destroyed, and even made to be the contrary of what it ought to be."

"I asked the question with no other intention than to set the gentleman free from the necessity of silence, and to give him an opportunity of mingling [to mingle] on equal terms with a polite assembly from which, *however uneasy*, he could not then *escape*, by a *kind introduction* of the only subject on which I believed him to be able to speak with propriety."—Dr. Johnson.

"This," says Cobbett, "is a very bad sentence altogether. '*However uneasy*' applies to *assembly* and not to *gentleman*. Only observe how easily this might have been avoided. 'From which *he, however uneasy*, could not then escape.' After this we have, '*he could not then escape, by a kind introduction.*' We know what is *meant*; but the doctor, with all his *commas*, leaves the sentence confused. Let us see whether we can not make it clear: 'I asked the question with no other intention than, by a kind introduction of the only subject on which I believed him to be able to speak with propriety, to set the gentleman free from the necessity of silence, and to give him an opportunity of mingling on equal terms with a polite assembly from which he, however uneasy, could not then escape.'"

"Reason is the glory of human nature, and one of the chief eminences whereby we are raised above our fellow-creatures, the brutes, *in this lower world.*"—Doctor Watts' Logic.

"I have before showed an error," Cobbett remarks, "in

the *first* sentence of Doctor Watts' work. This is the *second* sentence. The words *in this lower world* are not words *misplaced* only; they are wholly *unnecessary*, and they do great harm, for they do these two things: first, they imply *that there are brutes in the higher world*; and, second, they excite a doubt *whether we are raised above those brutes*.

"I might greatly extend the number of my extracts from these authors; but here, I trust, are enough. I had noted down about *two hundred errors* in Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*; but, afterward perceiving that he had revised and corrected *The Rambler* with *extraordinary care*, I chose to make my extracts from that work rather than from the *Lives of the Poets*."

The position of the adverb should be as near as possible to the word it qualifies. Sometimes we place it before the auxiliary and sometimes after it, according to the thought we wish to express. The difference between "The fish should *properly* be broiled" and "The fish should be *properly* broiled" is apparent at a glance.

"The colon may be *properly* used in the following cases," should be, "may *properly* be used."

"This mode of expression *rather suits* a familiar than a grave style," should be, "suits a familiar *rather than* a grave style."

"It is a frequent error *in the writings even* of some good authors," should be, "in the writings of *even some good* authors."

"*Both* the circumstances of contingency and futurity are necessary," should be, "The circumstances of contingency and futurity are *both* necessary."

"He has made charges . . . which he has failed *utterly* to sustain."—New York Tribune. Here it is uncertain, at first sight, which verb the adverb is intended to qualify;

but the nature of the case makes it probable that the writer meant "has utterly failed to sustain."

"Under twenty years of Republican rule and policy our commerce has been left to British bottoms, and *almost* has the American flag been swept off the high seas."—Evening Telegram. Should be, "and the American flag has been swept almost off the high seas."

**Mistaken.** "If I am not *mistaken*, you are in the wrong," say, "If I *mistake not*." "I tell you, you are *mistaken*." Here *mistaken* means, "You are wrong ; you do not understand."

The locution, "You are mistaken," has been frequently attacked. My learned friend, Prof. James Wood Davidson, comes to its defense thus: "'You are *mistaken*' is a euphemism for 'You are *wrong*' ; it has less offensiveness. 'You are *wrong*' is a direct and censorious expression ; but 'You are mistaken' says 'You have been led away from the facts by specious circumstances or things, and thus have failed to get at the truth'—a softened and civil criticism. Mistaken = to take amiss, or into error ; and *to be mistaken* is to be *taken or led into error*. 'You are mistaken' = 'You have been led into error.'"

*You are*, or *he is*—as the case may be—in *error*, is the phrase preferred by many speakers.

The locution, "You are mistaken," is found in Shakespeare.

**Modest.** This word is sometimes, more especially in conversation, employed when *bashful* or *diffident* would convey the thought intended. *Modest* and *retiring* are opposed to *forward*, *self-sufficient*, and *conceited*. Persons that are only *modest* are never lacking in confidence and self-possession, while the *bashful* and *diffident* are always lacking in both.

**Modiste.** It is a hazardous thing to use words we do not know the meaning of, as we see by the following sentence: "It is not more than ten years since the Viscountess de Noue shocked the good ladies of St. Louis by appearing at one of the fashionable balls there in a dress made for her by a Parisian *modiste* that had been much admired in that city."

According to this, the viscountess had her gowns made by a *milliner*. The French for *dressmaker* is *couturière en robes*.

**Monopoly.** "The frequent and glaring misuse of this term is of no little importance, as it leads to confusion of thought and sometimes to very ill-advised political action. A monopoly is an industry that is protected from competition by legal enactment. Certain demagogues are doing their best to lead the unthinking multitude to apply the term to industries which are perfectly open to competition, but in which, for one reason or another, nobody cares to compete—a very widely different thing. The owner of a patent has a monopoly; but the notion that railroading, banking, or gasmaking can be a monopoly, as long as all the world is at liberty to engage therein if it pleases, is at once grotesque and dangerous."—Our Common Speech, by Gilbert M. Tucker.

**More perfect.** Such expressions as, "the *more* perfect of the two," "the *most* perfect thing of the kind I have ever seen," "the *most* complete cooking-stove ever invented," and the like, can not be defended logically, as nothing can be more perfect than perfection, or more complete than completeness. Still such phrases are, and probably will continue to be, used by good writers.

**Most.** "Everybody abuses this word," says Mr. Gould in his Good English; and then, in another paragraph, he



adds: "If a man would cross out *most* wherever he can find it in any book in the English language, he would in *almost* every instance improve the style of the book." That this statement may appear within bounds, he gives many examples from good authors, some of which are the following: "A *most* profound silence"; "a *most* [very] just idea"; "a *most* [very] complete orator"; "this was *most* [very] extraordinary"; "an object of *most* perfect esteem"; "a *most* [very] extensive erudition"; "he gave it *most* liberally away"; "it is, *most* assuredly, not because I value his services least"; "would *most* [very] seriously affect us"; "that such a system must *most* [very] widely and *most* [very] powerfully," etc.; "it is *most* [very] effectually nailed to the counter"; "it is *most* [quite] undeniable that," etc.

In nearly all these examples, if an intensive is desired, *very* would be the proper word to use.

This word is much, and very erroneously, used for *almost*. "He comes here *most* every day." The user of such a sentence as this means to say that he comes *nearly* every day, but he *really* says, if he says anything, that he comes more every day than he does every night. In such sentences *almost*, and not *most*, is the word to use.

**Mutual.** This word is much misused in the phrase "our *mutual* friend." Macaulay says: "*Mutual* friend is a low vulgarity for *common* friend." *Mutual* properly relates to two persons, and implies reciprocity of sentiment—sentiment, be it what it may, received and returned. Thus we say properly, "John and James have a *mutual* affection," or "a *mutual* aversion"—i. e., they like or dislike each other; or, "John and James are *mutually* dependent"—i. e., they are dependent on each other. In using the word *mutual*, care should be taken not to add the words *for each*

*other* or *on each other*, the thought conveyed by these words being already expressed in the word *mutual*. "Dependent on each other" is the exact equivalent of "mutually dependent."

*Mutual* is often misused for *common*. Here are some examples of the correct use of the two words :

"After the hurry of our recognition was over, he pointed out two of our *common* friends."

"*Common* enmities are said to cement friendship." Substitute *mutual* for *common* and the meaning will be wholly changed. *Mutual enmity* means ill-will borne by two persons, the one toward the other, while *common enmity* means ill-will borne by two or more persons toward a common object.

"Our former correspondence was renewed, with the most hearty expression of *mutual* good will."

"These particulars I learned from the vicar, when we left the room, that they might be under no restraint in their *mutual* effusions."

"As you and I have no *common* friend, I can tell you no private history."

"Of two adversaries, it would be rash to condemn either upon the evidence [testimony] of the other ; and a *common* friend must keep himself suspended at least till he has heard both."

"The parts of our constitution have gradually, and almost insensibly, in a long course of time, accommodated themselves to each other [one another] and to their *common* as well as to their *separate* purposes."

"They met at the house of a *common* friend."

"A *common* dislike is a great bond of friendship."

"Their *mutual* dislike (i. e., their dislike for each other) was well known."

"With compliments to all our *common* friends, I am," etc.  
Here are some examples of the misuse of the two words :

"They speedily [soon] discovered that their enjoyment [love] of dancing and music was *mutual* [common]."

"The king saw he had no interest in becoming their *mutual* [common] executioner."

"We have the vulgarism of *mutual friend* for *common friend*."—Macaulay.

"When suddenly, and much to our *mutual* [common] astonishment, we found ourselves within ten paces of my wife and brother."

"Our sincere and grateful sense of their kind and heart-felt sympathy with us in the *mutual* loss we have sustained by the untimely decease [death] of our late brother."

*Mutual* is here not only misused, but, like *late*, it is superfluous, unless the meaning intended is that the loss was common to all parties—to the sympathizers as well as to the sympathized with—which does not seem to be the case.

"To their *mutual* [common] astonishment they saw a pen move itself into an erect position."

"Our intercourse with our *mutual* [common] cousins was like that between [among] brothers and sisters."

"Shakespeare, the *mutual* [common] ancestor of Englishmen and Americans."

"Our astonishment was *mutual* [common] at the altered tone of these papers."

**Myself.** This form of the personal pronoun is properly used in the nominative case only where *increased emphasis* is aimed at.

"I had as lief not be, as live to be

In awe of such a thing as I *myself*."

"I will do it *myself*," "I saw it *myself*." It is therefore

incorrect to say, "Mrs. Brown and *myself* [I] were both much pleased."

"I intended to send James, but he was ill, so I had to go *myself*." See REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS.

**Name.** This word is sometimes improperly used for *mention*; thus, "I never *named* the matter to any one" should be "I never *mentioned* the matter to any one."

**Nasty.** In England much used in the sense of *disagreeable*.

"This word, at best not well suited to dainty lips, is of late years shockingly misused by British folk who should be ashamed of such slipshod English." A titled English woman is said to have remarked to the gentleman by her side at dinner, "Do try this soup; it isn't half nasty."

"'Oh, don't you think "nice" is a *nasty* word?' asked Oscar Wilde of a bright Cleveland girl, the other evening, when the little beauty retorted, 'And do you think *nasty* is a nice word?'"

**Neighborhood.** See VICINITY.

**Neither.** See EITHER.

**Neither.** Should not be used for *none* nor for *any one*.

"There were artisans, tradesmen, and gentlemen, but *neither* [none] were allowed any special privileges." "Except in cases of unusual audacity, *neither* [no one] presumed to wear the dress of his betters." See EITHER.

**Neither—Nor.** "He would *neither* give wine, *nor* oil, *nor* money."—Thackeray. *The conjunction should be placed before the excluded object*; "neither *give*" implies neither some other *verb*, a meaning not intended. Rearrange thus, taking all the common parts of the contracted sentences together: "He would give *neither* wine, *nor* oil, *nor* money." So, "She can *neither* help her beauty, *nor* her courage, *nor* her cruelty" (Thackeray), should be, "She can help *neither*,"

etc. "He had *neither* time to intercept *nor* to stop her" (Scott), should be, "He had time *neither* to intercept," etc. "Some *neither* can for wits *nor* critics pass" (Pope), should be, "Some can *neither* for wits *nor* critics pass."

**Never.** Grammarians differ with regard to the correctness of using *never* in such sentences as, "He is in error, though *never* so wise"; "charm he *never* so wisely." In sentences like these, to say the least, it is better, in common with the great majority of writers, to use *ever*.

**New beginner.** All beginners are new, hence to qualify *beginner* with *new* is tautological.

**News.** This word is very often improperly used instead of *tidings*. The difference between the two words lies therein that to *news* we may be indifferent, while in *tidings* we are always interested. *News* gratifies curiosity; *tidings* allay anxiety or suspense. *News* is of public, *tidings* of individual, interest. "What is the *news* from Washington?" "Have you had any *tidings* of your brother?"

"His parents received *the news* [tidings] of his seizure, but beyond that they could learn nothing."

**Nice.** Archdeacon Hare remarks of the use—or rather misuse—of this word: "That stupid vulgarism by which we use the word *nice* to denote almost every mode of approbation, for almost every variety of quality, and, from sheer poverty of thought, or fear of saying anything definite, wrap up everything indiscriminately in this characterless domino, speaking at the same breath of a *nice* cheese-cake, a *nice* tragedy, a *nice* sermon, a *nice* day, a *nice* country, as if a universal deluge of *niaiserie*—for *nice* seems originally to have been only *niais*—had whelmed the whole island." *Nice* is as good a word as any other in its place, but its place is not everywhere. We talk very properly about a *nice* distinction, a *nice* discrimination, a *nice* calcu-

lation, a *nice* point, and about a person's being *nice*, and over-*nice*, and the like; but we certainly should not talk about Othello's being a *nice* tragedy, about Salvini's being a *nice* actor, or New York bay's being a *nice* harbor.\*

**Nicely.** The very quintessence of popinjay vulgarity is reached when *nicely* is made to do service for *well*, in this wise: "How do you do?" "*Nicely*." "How are you?" "*Nicely*."

**No.** This word of negation is responded to by *nor* in sentences like this: "Let your meaning be obscure, and *no* grace of diction *nor* any music of well-turned sentences will make amends."

"Whether he is there or *no*." Supply the ellipsis, and we have, "Whether he is there or *no* there." Clearly, the word to use in sentences like this is not *no*, but *not*. And yet our best writers sometimes inadvertently use *no* with *whether*. Example: "But perhaps some people are quite indifferent *whether* or *no* it is said," etc.—Richard Grant White. Supply the ellipsis, and we have, "said or *no* said." In a little book entitled *Live and Learn*, I find, "No *less* than fifty persons were there; no *fewer*," etc. In correcting one mistake, the writer himself makes one. It should be, "*Not* fewer," etc. If we ask, "There were fifty persons there—were there, or were there *not*?" the reply clearly would be, "There were *not* fewer than fifty." "There was *no* one of them who would not have been proud," etc., should be, "There was *not* one of them."

"*No* is a shortened form of *none* = *not one*, and there-

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\* The possessive construction here is, in my judgment, not imperatively demanded. There is certainly no lack of authority for putting the three substantives in the accusative. The possessive construction seems to me, however, to be preferable.

fore the indefinite article is pleonastic in 'No stronger and stranger a figure.'"—McCarthy.

**None.** Commonly treated as a plural: as, "*None* of them *were* taller than I." Though *none* is a contraction of *not one*, to construe *none*, in a sentence like this, as a singular, would antagonize prevailing usage. Instead of using *none* as a singular, it is better to write *not one*, or *no one*.

In answer to such a question as, "Did you bring me a letter?" it is quite correct to say, "There *was none* in your box."

"There is [are] none of us who would relish such treatment."

"All that is being said is said upon [on] the responsibility of the persons who say it; *none* [not one] of them *knows* how near the truth he is." Change *none* to *not one*, and the sentence is more emphatic than it would be if *knows* were changed to *know*.

"Imagine a land where none is [are] free to write or [to] say anything except what the Government," etc.

**Not.** The correlative of *not*, when it stands in the first member of a sentence, is *nor* or *neither*. "*Not* for thy ivory *nor* thy gold will I unbind thy chain." "I will *not* do it, *neither* shall you."

The wrong placing of *not* often gives rise to an imperfect negation; thus, "John and James were *not* there," means that John and James were not there *in company*. It does not exclude the presence of one of them. The negative should precede in this case: "Neither John *nor* James was there." "Our company was *not* present" (as a company, but some of us might have been), should be, "No member of our company was present."

"I may say, 'What *was* my astonishment,' and I may say, 'What *was not* my astonishment,' and I may convey

the same meaning. By the former I mean, 'How great was my astonishment'; by the latter, that no astonishment could be greater than mine was."—Alford.

**Not—but only.** "Errors frequently arise in the use of *not—but only*, to understand which we must attend to the force of the whole expression. 'He did *not* pretend to extirpate French music, *but only* to cultivate and civilize it.' Here the *not* is obviously misplaced. 'He pretended, or professed, *not* to extirpate.'"—Bain.

**Nothing like.** Often improperly used for *not nearly*. "She is *nothing like* as [not nearly so] clever as her sister."

**Notorious.** Though this word can not be properly used in any but a bad sense, we sometimes see it used instead of *noted*, which may be used in either a good or a bad sense. *Notorious* characters are always persons to be shunned, whereas *noted* characters may or may not be persons to be shunned.

"This is the tax a man must pay for his virtues—they hold up a torch to his vices and render those frailties *notorious* in him which [that] would pass without observation in another."—Lacon.

**Noun Construction.** The noun construction is a construction that is well-nigh universally employed, and yet, in strictness, it is commonly—perhaps invariably—ungrammatical. Wordy it certainly always is. By noun construction I would designate that construction that expresses action, doing, without employing a verb in any form soever; as, for example, "It tends to *the elimination* of the weak and *the preservation* of the strong."—N. Y. Sun, March 3, 1895.

This sentence is weak—the result of having fifty per cent more syllables than are necessary—and, to my thinking, it is ungrammatical. Its grammar is mended by



changing the nouns *elimination* and *preservation* to the verbal nouns *eliminating* and *preserving*, and both grammar and rhetoric are mended by employing infinitives, which would give us, "It tends to *eliminate* the weak and to *preserve* the strong"—thirteen syllables against twenty-one.

"The *determination* [determining] of distances with a telemeter," etc.—Standard Dictionary.

"Education that is not centered on the *refinement* [refining] and *ennoblement* [ennobling] of the mind . . . is worse than the shadow."—Dawson.

"Chief Byrnes puts at the disposal of Mayor Strong his services for the *reformation* [reforming] and *reorganization* [reorganizing] of the police force."—N. Y. Sun.

"The slowness in the *collection* [collecting] and *circulation* [circulating] of news," etc. [better: in *collecting* and *circulating* news].

"Cleveland must attend to the *execution* of the income tax."—N. Y. Sun. Execute a tax?! [Attend to the collecting(?)]

"The arrangements for *diffusing* education and the *establishment* of newspapers."—N. Y. Sun. Why two forms of expression in the same sentence? Why not "establishing newspapers"?

"In the *consideration* of [considering] Hamlet's case, nothing should be," etc.—Richard Grant White.

"No department . . . offered less encouragement to the spirit of monopoly than the *production* [producing], *refinement* [refining], and *distribution* [distributing] of this natural oil."

"It is not by the *consolidation* or the *concentration* of powers, but by their *distribution*, that good government is effected" [It is not by consolidating or concentrating powers, but by distributing them, that, etc.].

"If they are not competent *for the exercise of* [to exercise] the franchise, they are incompetent *for the administration of* [to administer] public affairs."—N. Y. Sun.

"Its policy must be free from suspicion either in *securing* the appropriations or in *the assignment of* [assigning] the work."—N. Y. Sun.

"The great endowment left by Mr. Lenox *for the establishment of* [to establish] a library," etc.—N. Y. Sun.

"The *imposition* [imposing] of a license tax," etc.—N. Y. Sun.

"Why . . . less objection to landing European forces *for the occupation of* [to occupy] Corinto than *for the occupation of* [to occupy] Samana?"—N. Y. Sun.

"Such war could only be waged [tr. only] *for the purpose of* [to inflict] punishment, and not *for the acquisition of* [to acquire] territory."—N. Y. Sun.

"When France sent war ships *for the enforcement of* [to enforce] a claim."—N. Y. Sun.

"The *collection* [collecting] of duties will be conducted," etc.—N. Y. Sun.

"The policy of the administration has resulted in *the establishment of* [establishing] a precedent," etc.—N. Y. Sun.

"England has made other demands, among them the assent of N. to the *appointment* [appointing] of a commission," etc.—N. Y. Sun.

"The *preparation* [preparing] of tobacco for use is called curing. It has for its purpose the *drying* and *preservation* [preserving] of the leaf as well as the *development* [developing] of the peculiar aroma."

"The Legislature may provide by-laws for the *supervision* [supervising], *registration* [registering], *control* [controlling], and *identification* [identifying] of all persons."

"Statistics is the science that deals with the *collection* [collecting], *classification* [classifying], and *tabulation* [tabulating] of facts."—Standard Dictionary.

"Economics is the science that treats of the *development* [developing] of material resources, or of the *production* [producing], *preservation* [preserving], and *distribution* [distributing] of wealth," etc.—Standard Dictionary.

"It must have been earlier than the time when the earth became fitted *for the reception of* [to receive] organized life."

"The quality of being salubrious or favorable to the *preservation* [preserving] or *restoration* [restoring] of health."—Standard Dictionary.

"Mr. Iselin is giving unremitting personal care and labor to the *supervision* [supervising] and *development* [developing] of the Defender."—N. Y. Sun.

"It is merely a matter of police regulation ; it will also be serviceable in the *imposition and collection* [imposing and collecting] of taxes."—N. Y. Sun.

"The *indication* of an infinitive by *to* without the actual expression of the verb to which it belongs is a colloquialism." Rewritten : The indicating of an infinitive with *to* without the verb it belongs to is a colloquialism. See VERBAL NOUNS.

**No use.** If we would be idiomatic, we must say *of* no use.

**Novice.** See AMATEUR. See page 324.

**Novitiate—Novice.** These words stand in the same relation to each other that *consulate* stands to *consul*, yet *novitiate* is often misused for *novice*, thus : "Henryson seems to have traveled in his youth as a *novitiate* [novice] of the Franciscan order."

Both words are properly used thus : "She has been

hitherto little more than a *novice*, but the intelligence and force she displays as Miriam brings her *novitiate* to an end."

*Novitiate* means the state or time of being a novice.

**Number.** It is not an uncommon thing for a pronoun in the plural number to be used in connection with an antecedent in the singular.

"Fifty dollars reward for the conviction of any person caught collecting or keeping fares given to *them* to deposit in the box": should be, to *him*. "A person may be very near-sighted if *they* can not recognize an acquaintance ten feet off." Should be, if *he*.

The verb *to be* is often used in the singular when it should be in the plural; thus, "There *is* several reasons why it would be better": say *are*. "How many *is* there?" say *are*. "There *is* four": say *are*. "*Was* there many?" say *were*. "No matter how many there *was*": say *were*.

"When singular nouns connected by *and* are preceded by *each*, *every*, or *no*, the verb must be singular." We say, for example, "*Each* boy and *each* girl *studies*." "*Every* leaf, and *every* twig, and *every* drop of water *teems* with life." "*No* book and *no* paper *was* arranged."

*Each* being singular, a pronoun or verb to agree with it must also be singular; thus, "Let them depend each on *his* own exertions"; "Each city has *its* peculiar privileges"; "Everybody has a right to look after *his* own interest."

Errors are often made by not repeating the verb; thus, "Its significance is as varied as the passions": correctly, "as *are* the passions." "The words are as incapable of analysis as the thing signified": correctly, "as *is* the thing signified."

"When the nominative," says Bain, "is a relative pronoun, we must look to the antecedent in order to deter-

mine the number of the verb." "One of the most valuable books that *have* [not *has*] appeared in any language."

"This is one of the best treatises on money and coins that *has* [have] ever been published."

"I confess I am one of those who *am* [are] unable to refuse my [their] assent to the conclusions of those philosophers," etc.

"One of those fanciful, exotic combinations that *gives* [give] the same expression of brilliancy and richness," etc.

"One of the first things that *opens* [open] your eyes to the state of domestic service," etc.

"The plan of Mr. Bright was certainly one of the boldest that *has* [have] ever been put forward."

"Whereon Don Guzman replied with one of those smiles of his that *was* [were] so like a sneer."

**Numerous.** Often used when the proper word is *many* or *large*.

*Numerous* means, consisting of a great number ; being many. Though "We have a *numerous* acquaintance" is permissible, it is not permissible to say, "We have *numerous* acquaintances" "A large acquaintance" or "many acquaintances" is what we should say. *Numerous*, it would seem, is most used to qualify nouns having a collective signification, such as family, class, army, assembly, and the like ; but even then *large* is usually—perhaps always—the better word to use.

I can not think of a sentence in which *numerous* is the best adjective to use, when placed before its noun ; when placed after its noun the task is easier, and for such a use of the word the following sentence offers an excellent example :

"The reports made to the commissioner by his special agents furnish proof that the land thieves have been more

powerful—if not, in fact, more *numerous*—than the honest settlers."

**O—Oh.** It is only the most careful writers that use these two interjections with proper discrimination. The distinction between them is said to be modern. *Oh* is simply an exclamation, and should always be followed by some mark of punctuation, usually by an exclamation point. "Oh! you are come at last." "Oh, help him, you sweet heavens!" "Oh, woe is me!" "Oh! I die, Horatio." *O*, in addition to being an exclamation, denotes a calling to or adjuration; thus, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!" "O grave, where is thy victory?" "O heavenly powers, restore him!" "O shame! where is thy blush?"

**Obedience.** Sometimes misused for *response*.

"These articles, in the course of [during] their publication, have [omit] aroused [excited] a profound interest [in what?], and the present cheap edition is [published] in *obedience* [response] to a demand for the papers in a form," etc.

We *obey* a command and *respond* to a demand.

We say, "*In the course of* the evening there was an alarm of fire," and "*during* the evening [i. e., the whole evening] there was a smell of smoke in the hall."

**Obliterate.** Sometimes, as in the following sentence, misused for *destroy*:

"Yet writers of standing have often confounded [often confound] these two words, thereby *obliterating* [destroying] the separate functions of each [their separate functions]."—Dr. Hodgson.

English idiom permits us to say that happiness, peace, or a function has been *destroyed*, but it does not permit us to say that either of them has been *obliterated*. *Obliterate*,

like its synonym *erase*, is never properly used in any but a physical sense.

**Observe.** The dictionaries authorize the use of this word as a synonym of *say* and *remark*; as, for example, "What did you *observe*?" for "What did you *say*, or *remark*?" In this sense, however, it is better to leave *observe* to the exclusive use of those that delight in being fine.

**Of all others.** "The vice of covetousness, *of all others*, enters deepest into the soul." This sentence says that covetousness is one of the *other* vices. A thing can not be *another* thing, nor can it be one of a number of *other* things. The sentence should be, "Of all the vices, covetousness enters deepest into the soul"; or, "The vice of covetousness, of all the vices, enters," etc.; or, "The vice of covetousness, *more than* all other vices, enters," etc.

**Of any.** This phrase is often used when *of all* is meant; thus, "This is the largest *of any* I have seen": should be, "the largest *of all*," etc. If *any* is used, it should be with the comparative, "This is larger than any other," for example.

**Off of.** In such sentences as "Give me a yard *off of* this piece of calico," either the *off* or the *of* is superfluous. The sentence would be correct with either one, but not with both of them. "The apples fell *off of* the tree": read, "fell *off* the tree."

**Often.** This adverb is properly compared by changing its termination—often, oftener, oftenest. Why some writers use *more* and *most* to compare it, it is not easy to see; this mode of comparing it is certainly not euphonious.

**Older—Elder.** "He is the *older* man of the two, and the *oldest* in the neighborhood." "He is the *elder* of the two sons, and the *eldest* of the family." "The *elder* son is

heir to the estate; he is *older* than his brother by ten years."

**On.** Sales are made *by*, not *on*, subscription.

"Both volumes will be sold exclusively *on* [by] subscription."

"*On* seems to be a favorite preposition with Americans; at least it is constantly found where other prepositions would seem to be more correct and appropriate. F. G. Halleck, in condemning the abuse of *on*, quoted the phrases: 'Going to Europe *on* a steamboat; writing a letter *on* Chambers Street, and delivering it *on* Fifth Avenue.' Persons are constantly heard to speak of friends whom they saw *on* the street, and having come *on* the cars, while in the South members are elected to sit *on* the Legislature.—Schele de Vere.

The locution "*on* the street" has a signification in England that deters every one from using it in the sense of "*in* the street."

**On to.** We get *on* a chair, *on* an omnibus, *on* a stump, *on* "a high horse," and *on* a spree; not *on to*. *On to* should not be used except in cases where both words are necessary to prevent ambiguity.

**On—Upon.** The preference of many writers would seem to be for *upon*. We are told of something that happened *upon* Monday last, or of something that is going to happen *upon* Decoration Day, and yet, in writing prose, we could get on very well if there were no such word.

"*Upon* differs very little in use from *on*," says the Standard Dictionary. "*Upon* is sometimes used for reasons of euphony or rhythm, and is also sometimes preferable when motion or position is involved: *on* when merely rest or support is to be indicated. *Upon* is sometimes written in two words; as, 'Let us go *up on* the roof.'"



**One.** Certain pronouns of demonstrative signification are called indefinite because they refer to no particular subject. This is one of them. If we were putting a supposition by way of argument or illustration, we might say, "Suppose *I* were to lose my way in a wood"; or, "Suppose *you* were to lose your way in a wood"; or, "Suppose *one* were to lose *one's* way in a wood." All these forms are used, but, as a rule, the last is to be preferred. The first verges on egotism, and the second makes free with another's person, whereas the third is indifferent. "If *one's* honesty were impeached, what should *one* do?" is more courtly than to take either one's self or the person addressed for the example.

*One* should be followed by *one*, and not by *he*. "The better acquainted *one* is with any kind of rhetorical trick, the less liable *he* is to be misled by it": should be, "the less liable *one* is to be misled by it."

"Can *one* do what *he* [one] chooses with *his* [one's] money? Can *he* [one] destroy it?"—Corr. N. Y. Sun.

Professor Bain says, in his Composition Grammar:

"This pronoun continually lands writers in difficulties. English idiom requires that when the pronoun has to be again referred to it should be used itself a second time. The correct usage is shown by Pope: '*One* may be ashamed to consume half *one's* days in bringing sense and rhyme together.' It would be against idiom to say 'half *his* days.'

"Still, the repetition of the pronoun is often felt to be heavy, and writers have recourse to various substitutions."

Fenimore Cooper, like Scott, is not very particular; an example may be quoted: "Modesty is a poor man's wealth; but, as *we* grow substantial in the world, patroon, *one* can afford to begin to speak truth of *himself* as well as of *his* neighbor." Were Cooper a careful writer, we might per-

suade ourselves that he chose *we* and *one* with a purpose: *we* might indicate that the speaker had himself and the patrol directly in his eye, although at the same time he wanted to put it generally; and *one* might hint that modesty succeeded in getting the better of him. But *himself* and *his* would alone show that such speculations are too refined for the occasion.

*Men* was more frequent in good writing formerly than now. "Neither do *men* [does one] light a candle and put it under a bushel." "Do *men* [does one] gather grapes of thorns?"

"When *one* suddenly wakes up deaf, *one* forgets for a time that *one* has already been blind."

*One* is frequently used superfluously; as, "It might have been expressed in *one* half the space."

The diction is always bettered by repeating the noun in sentences like this:

"It is often hard to tell a good man from a bad *one* by his face." Say, rather, "a good man from a bad man."

**Ones.** "There is a word," says an anonymous English writer, "that, especially in its plural form, is often used without any necessity. We refer to the word *ones*. 'The horses were very fine *ones*'; 'there were many admirable dresses, and among the best *ones* were those of Lady X. and the Countess of Y.'; 'the speeches were all good, the best *ones* being by Lord Z. and the Duke of Q.'; and so on *ad infinitum*. In all such cases *ones* is superfluous. The same word, in the singular and in the plural, is often inelegantly made to do duty for some other term when that other term should be used. The avoidance of repetition is of course at times desirable, but it is frequently proper to repeat a word that occurs in a preceding sen-

tence, particularly if ambiguity would be the result of not doing so."

"Lord Melbourne was a man of very different abilities and character from the eminent *ones* [men] that have now been drawn."

**Only.** This word, when used as an adjective, is more frequently misplaced than any other word in the language. Indeed, I am confident that it is not correctly placed half the time, either in conversation or in writing. Thus, "In its pages, papers of sterling merit [only] will *only* appear" (Miss Braddon); "Things are getting dull down in Texas; they *only* shot [only] three men down there last week"; "I have *only* got [only] three." *Only* is sometimes improperly used for *except* or *unless*; thus, "The trains will not stop *only* when the bell rings." The meaning here is clearly "*except* when the bell rings."

Dr. Bain, in his Higher English Grammar, speaking of the order of words, says:

"The word requiring most attention is *only*."

"According to the position of *only*, the same words may be made to express very different meanings."

" 'He *only* lived for their sakes.' Here *only* must be held as qualifying 'lived for their sakes,' the emphasis being on *lived*, the word immediately adjoining. The meaning then is, 'he *lived*,' but did not *work*, did not *die*, did not do any other thing for their sakes."

" 'He lived *only* for their sakes.' *Only* now qualifies 'for their sakes,' and the sentence means, he lived for this one reason, namely, for their sakes, and not for any other reason."

" 'He lived for their sakes *only*.' The force of the word when placed at the end is peculiar. Then it often has a diminutive or disparaging signification. 'He lived for their sakes,' and not for any more worthy reason. 'He

gave sixpence *only*,' is an insinuation that more was expected.

"By the use of *alone*, instead of *only*, other meanings are expressed. 'He *alone* lived for their sakes'; that is, *he, and nobody else*, did so. 'He lived for their sakes *alone*,' or, 'for the sake of them *alone*'; that is, not for the sake of any other persons. 'It was *alone* by the help of the Confederates that any such design could be carried out.' Properly *only*.

"'When men grow virtuous in their old age, they *only* make a sacrifice to God of the devil's leavings.'—Pope. Here *only* is rightly placed. 'Think *only* of the past as its remembrance gives you pleasure,' should be, 'think of the past *only* as its remembrance,' etc. 'As he did not leave his name, it was *only* known that a gentleman had called on business': it was known *only*. 'I can *only* refute the accusation by laying before you the whole': this would mean, 'The only thing I am able to do is to refute: I may not retaliate, or let it drop; I must *refute* it.' 'The negroes are to appear at church *only* in boots'; that is, when the negroes go to church they are to have no clothing but boots. 'The negroes are to appear *only* at church in boots' might mean that they are not to appear anywhere but at church, whether in boots or out of them. The proper arrangement would be to connect the adverbial adjunct, *in boots*, with its verb, *appear*, and to make *only* qualify *at church* and no more: 'The negroes are to appear in boots *only* at church.'"

It thus appears very plain that we should look well to our *onlys*.

"His eyes *only* directed their gaze on the finest feature of each face, his ears *only* caught the happiest remarks, his heart *only* thrilled at the noble motive in every ac-

tion."—John Oliver Hobbs. Three *onlys*, and all misplaced.

**Other.** This word is very often improperly omitted in sentences like the following:

"Is there any State in this Union that has contributed so much to the honor and welfare of this country as Virginia?" Virginia being a State, the sentence obviously should be, "Is there any *other* State," etc.

"In no [other] language does it work so much mischief as in our English."

"He said that the American vessels presented a finer appearance than any [other] vessels there."—N. Y. Herald.

**Ought—Should.** These two words, though they both imply obligation, should not be used indiscriminately. *Ought* is the stronger term; what we *ought* to do, we are morally bound to do. We *ought* to be truthful and honest, and *should* be respectful to our elders and kind to our inferiors.

**Over.** Very often used in the sense of *more than*, which is to be preferred.

"It is *over* [more than] a mile from here to the river."

**Overalls.** Very frequently and very incorrectly pronounced *overhalls*.

**Overflowed.** *Flown* is the past participle of *to fly*, and *flowed* of *to flow*. As, therefore, a river does not *fly* over its banks, but *flows* over them, we should say of it that it has *overflowed*, and not that it has *overflowed*.

**Over his signature.** Properly, *under*. See SIGNATURE.

**Overly.** This word is now used only by the unschooled.

**Owing.** See DUE.

**Own.** This word is sometimes very incorrectly used in the sense of *confess*.

"Deaf Lady Dowager *owned* [confessed] to having arrived at sixty years [at the age of sixty]."

"I *own* [confess] I peeped over the wall."

"But my point of view, I *own* [confess], was not that of my countrymen."

**Panacea.** This word means, unaided, a cure-all; a medicine supposed to cure all diseases; a universal remedy; a catholicon. When, therefore, we talk about a *universal* panacea we are tautological.

**Pantaloon.** "We find a writer in the *Hour* speaking of *pantaloon*s, and we beg to inform the editor of that journal that no such thing is known to the English language. The garment in question is properly called *trousers*. *Pantaloon*s is a word of Italian origin, and was originally applied to the peculiar hose worn by the *pantalone* or clown in a pantomime. At any rate, it is not a word of good repute in the English language."—N. Y. Sun.

**Pants.** This abbreviation is not used by those that are careful in the choice of words. The purist does not use the word *pantaloon*s even, but *trousers*. *Pants* are worn by *gents*, who eat *lunches* and *open* wine, and *trousers* are worn by *gentlemen*, who eat *luncheons* and *order* wine.

**Paradox.** Often misused for *absurdity*. A *paradox* is a *seeming absurdity* that is true in fact; hence, to say "It seems a paradox," is equivalent to saying "It seems a seeming absurdity"; and to say "It *is* a paradox," is equivalent to saying "It seems an absurdity."

Here are two sentences in which the word is correctly used:

"It is no [not] less a truth than a *paradox* [i. e., than

a seeming absurdity] that there are no greater fools than atheistical wits, and none so credulous as infidels."

"*Paradoxical* as it may be [i. e., absurd as it may seem], especially in contrast with the progress of England, it is strictly true."

*Paradox* must always be used with the verb *to be*, and never with *to seem*.

"This may *seem* a *paradox*, but it is nevertheless a fact."—J. S. Mill. Correctly: This may *be* a *paradox*, or, This may *seem* an *absurdity*.

"It is less *paradoxical* [absurd] than it may seem to say," etc.

"The doctrine only appears [seems] a *paradox* [an absurdity] because it has usually been so expressed as apparently to contradict these well-known facts."

**Paraphernalia.** This is a law term. In Roman law it meant the goods that a woman brought to her husband besides her dowry. In English law it means the goods that a woman is allowed to have after the death of her husband, besides her dower, consisting of her apparel and ornaments suitable to her rank. When used in speaking of the affairs of every-day life it is usually misused.

**Parlor.** This word, in the sense of *drawing-room*, according to Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall, except in the United States and some of the British colonies, is obsolete.

**Partake.** This is a very fine word to use instead of *to eat*; just the word for young women that hobble on French heels.

**Partially—Partly.** "It is only *partially* done." This use of the adverb *partially* is sanctioned by high authority, but that does not make it correct. A thing done in part is *partly*, not *partially*, done.

"But '*Partially*, for *not totally*, *only in part*, was in

some connections good English to Sir Thomas Brown; and from the educated sense of euphony which distinguishes modern ears it has been well-nigh completely resuscitated. There are cases in which *partly*, if substituted for it, would affect many persons of nice perceptions much after the manner of a wrong note in music—e. g., “Shakespeare did perfectly what Æschylus did *partially*” (Ruskin).”—Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall.

**Participial Nouns.** See VERBAL NOUNS.

**Participles.** When the present participle is used substantively, in sentences like the following, it is preceded by the definite article and followed by the preposition *of*. The omitting of the preposition is a common error. Thus, “Or, it is *the drawing* a conclusion that was before either unknown or dark,” should be, “the drawing *of* a conclusion.” “Prompted by the most extreme vanity, he persisted in the writing bad verses,” should be, “in writing bad verses,” or “in *the writing of* bad verses.” “There is a misuse of the article *a* which [that] is very common. It is the using it before the word *most*.”—Moon. Most writers would say “the using *of* it.” Mr. Moon argues for his construction—i. e., for the construction that leaves out the *of*.

**Particles.** “Nothing but study of the best writers and practice in composition will enable us to decide what are the prepositions and conjunctions that ought to [should] go with certain verbs. The following examples illustrate some common blunders :

“‘It was characterized *with* eloquence’: read ‘by.’

“‘A testimonial *of* the merits of his grammar’: read ‘to.’

“‘It was an example of the love *to form* comparisons’: read ‘of forming.’



“‘ Repetition is always to be preferred *before* obscurity ’ : read ‘ to.’

“‘ He made an effort *for meeting* them ’ : read ‘ to meet.’

“‘ They have no *other* object *but* to come ’ : read ‘ other object than,’ or omit ‘ other.’

“Two verbs are not infrequently followed by a single preposition, which accords with one only—e. g., ‘ This duty *is repeated* and inculcated *upon* the reader.’ ‘ Repeat *upon* ’ is nonsense ; we must read ‘ is repeated *to* and inculcated *upon*.’ ”—Nichol’s English Composition.

We often see *for* used with the substantive *sympathy* ; the best practice, however, uses *with* ; thus, “ Words can not express the deep sympathy I feel *with* you.”—Queen Victoria.

**Party.** This is a very good word in its place, as in legal documents, but it is very much out of its place when used—as it often is by the unschooled—where good taste would use the word *person*. Not, the *party* that I saw, but the *person*. Not, I know a *party*, but a *person*.

**Passive.** “ Constant attention is the price of good English. There is one fault [error] that perpetually [continually] appears in spite of all castigation. ‘ William Knack,’ says a contemporary, ‘ was given a benefit at the Thalia last evening.’ This sort of phraseology is exceedingly vicious. It is hard to understand the depravity of its invention. It seems that a benefit was given to Mr. Knack ; yet the infernal ingenuity of the reporters contrives to frame a sentence in which there are two nominatives and only one singular verb.”—N. Y. Sun.

True, this kind of word-placing is highly objectionable ; but if we concede that the sentence says—though barbarously—what it was intended to say, we have only to

consider Knack as being in the dative (governed by *to* understood) and not in the nominative case to make it grammatical. By a little transposing we have, "A benefit was given William Knack at the Thalia Theater last evening." The transposition does not change the grammatical relation of the words. The sense and not the positions of the words determines.

If the sentence were, "*He* was given a benefit," its grammar would be indefensible, since we can not construe *he* as a dative (or as an objective after a preposition). Here, *he* is the subject of *was given*, and *benefit* tries, but tries in vain, to be the object. "*Him* was given a benefit" would be better, because we could govern him by *to* understood, calling it a dative or an objective, as we pleased.

Examples of this objectionable phraseology are frequently met with. Here are a few :

"He was given the control of the third military district."

"He was given a life interest in the estate."

"I was given one of those copies."

"The nations should have been given warning."—Governor Budd.

"Among the questions discussed at the session of the University of the State of New York this was one :

"Should the A. M. degree be abandoned, or given a distinct pedagogic significance?"

"What can be done when the chiefs of the university show such dreadful ignorance of the English language?"—N. Y. Sun.

"With us ministers, we are so constantly given occasion to study character," etc.

"For every scratch I have been given he has two scars."

"He was convicted, and was given a sentence of twenty-one years."

"He had been refused her hand."—N. Y. World.

"While in prison he *was given a position* in the Warden's office, and *was granted many privileges*. On account of his good behavior he *was given credit*, and in 1888 had but three more years to serve."

**Past.** Improperly used, in such sentences as the following, for *last*.

"Hazeltine has spent seven hundred dollars within the *past* three days."

"The phantom 'crow,' which has been so assiduously bolted during the *past* few days, will prove a veritable fowl."

"Within the *past* year there have been many changes in St. Louis."

"Reilly, who had been in the habit of handling snakes for the *past* twenty years, had been frequently warned about [against] the diamond backs."

"Hillbender is usually a very orderly place, but we have had two shooting affrays in the *past* week."

"In the many tariff revisions which [that] have been necessary for the *past* twenty-three years, or which [that] may hereafter become necessary, the Republican party has maintained," etc.—Blaine.

Read *last* instead of *past* in every one of these sentences. *Past* does not in a single instance express what the writer intends to say.

**Patronize.** This word and its derivatives would be much less used by the American tradesman than they are if he were better acquainted with their true meaning. Then he would solicit his neighbor's *custom*, not his *patronage*. A man can have no *patrons* without incurring obligations—without be-

coming a *protégé*; while a man may have customers innumerable, and, instead of placing himself under obligations to them, he may place them under obligations to him. Princes are the *patrons* of those tradesmen that they allow to call themselves their purveyors; as, "John Smith, Haberdasher to H. R. H. the Prince of Wales." Here the Prince *patronizes* John Smith.

**Pell-mell.** This adverb means mixed or mingled together; as, "Men, horses, chariots, crowded *pell-mell*." It can not properly be applied to an individual. To say, for example, "He rushed pell-mell down the stairs," is as incorrect as it would be to say, "He rushed down the stairs *mixed together*."

"A fourteen-year-old cowboy on a pony was driving a steer in the alley near the Journal office one day last week, when the steer made for the back door of Uecker's saloon, went *pell-mell* through the back door and saloon and out of [at] the front door on the dead run, followed by the daring boy on the pony."

**People.** This word is much used when some one of the words *community*, *commonwealth*, *nation*, *public*, or *country* would seem better to express the thought intended. *People*, as the word is often used, not infrequently conveys the impression that a class is meant—a class that includes all, perhaps, but the very rich and the higher officials. Now as there are, strictly, no classes in the United States, as all are equal in the eyes of our institutions, as every citizen is the peer of every other citizen, save in eligibility to the presidency, the impression conveyed by the word *people* is often erroneous. For example, instead of, "The Senate must take action and obey the will of the *people*," would it not better express what is intended were we to say, "the will of the *nation*, or of the *country*"?

"Why should silver be forced upon [on] the *people* [public] as a substitute for greenbacks?" etc.

"Tell The Sun and the *people* [public] that we will [shall?] enforce the laws."

**Per.** This Latin preposition is a good deal used in such phrases as *per* day, *per* man, *per* pound, *per* ton, and so on. In all such cases it is better to use plain English, and say, *a* day, *a* man, *a* pound, *a* ton, etc. *Per* is correct before Latin nouns only; as, *per* annum, *per* diem, *per* cent., etc.

**Perform.** "She *performs* on the piano beautifully." In how much better taste it is to say simply, "She *plays* the piano well," or, more superlatively, "exceedingly well," or "admirably." If we talk about *performing* on musical instruments, to be consistent, we should call those that *perform*, piano-performers, cornet-performers, violin-performers, and so on.

**Permit—Allow.** These words are very nearly allied in meaning, but they are not, as most persons seem to think, absolutely interchangeable. To *permit* is formally to consent; to *allow* is tacitly to consent. *Permit* is comparatively positive and signifies to grant leave; *allow* is comparatively negative or passive and signifies merely not to forbid.

"It is shameful that we should *allow* ourselves to remain in ignorance."

"If you will *permit* me to do so, I will pay you a visit to-morrow."

"I wished to assist him, but he would not *permit* it."

**Perpetually.** This word is sometimes misused for *continually*. Dr. William Mathews, in his Words, their Use and Abuse, says: "The Irish are *perpetually* using *shall* for *will*." *Perpetual* means never ceasing, continuing

without intermission, uninterrupted ; while *continual* means that that is constantly renewed and recurring with perhaps frequent stops and interruptions. As the Irish do something *besides* misuse *shall*, the doctor should have said that they *continually* use *shall* for *will*. I might perhaps venture to intimate that *perpetually* is likewise misused in the following sentence, which I copy from the London Queen, if I were not conscious that the monster that can write and print such a sentence would not hesitate to cable a thunderbolt at an offender on the slightest provocation. Judge, if my fears are groundless : " But some few people contract the ugly habit of making use of these expressions unconsciously and continuously, *perpetually* interlarding their conversation with them."

" She [Pisa] was *perpetually* [continually] at war by sea and land."—Howells.

" Somebody ' rustled ' it, and his *perpetual* (continual) inquiries after it resulted," etc.—Theodore Roosevelt.

" The amateur singer is *perpetually* [continually] introducing consecutive fifths and octaves into his music, *perpetually* [continually] bringing wrong color notes into his painting."—Author of The Green Carnation.

**Person.** See PARTY ; also INDIVIDUAL.

**Personalty.** This word does not, as some persons think, mean the articles worn on one's person. It is properly a law term, and means *personal property*.

" There is but one case on record of a peer of England leaving over \$7,500,000 *personalty*."

An English lady, desiring to leave a servant her clothing and jewels, described them in her will as her *personalty*, thereby, contrary to her intention, including ten thousand pounds in her bequest.

**Personification.** That rhetorical figure that attributes

sex, life, or action to inanimate objects, or ascribes to objects and brutes the acts and qualities of rational beings, is called *personification* or *prosopopœia*.

"The mountains *sing together*, the hills rejoice and *clap their hands*." "The worm, *aware* of his intent, *harangued* him thus."

"See, *Winter* comes to *rule* the varied year,  
*Sullen* and *sad* with all his rising train."—Thomson.

"So saying, her rash hand, in evil hour,  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate!  
*Earth felt the wound*; and *Nature from her scat*,  
*Sighing through all her works*, gave signs of woe,  
*That all was lost*."—Milton.

"War and Love are strange compeers.  
War sheds blood, and Love sheds tears;  
War has swords, and Love has darts;  
War breaks heads, and Love breaks hearts."

"Levity is often less foolish and Gravity less wise than each of them appears."

"The English language, by reserving the distinction of gender for living beings that have sex, gives especial scope for personification. The highest form of personification should be used seldom, and only when justified by the presence of strong feeling."—Bain.

"Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,  
Have oftentimes no connection. Knowledge dwells  
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;  
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;  
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."—Cowper.

**Perspicuity.** This word is not infrequently misused for *perspicacity*, though they are quite unlike in meaning. A near synonym of *perspicuity* is *clearness*. Both words

denote qualities requisite to render a discourse intelligible. *Clearness* of intellect is a natural gift ; *perspicuity* is largely an acquired art.

“ Whenever we think clearly we express ourselves with *perspicuity*.”

*Perspicacity* is the quality of being quick-sighted, discerning, acute, keen, which is the meaning intended in the following sentences :

“ He had a high estimation of the intellectual and moral power and *perspicuity* [perspicacity] of the French mind.”

“ The great power of the Church, and the general ignorance, want of *perspicuity* [perspicacity], and submissiveness of the laity enabled it to fill up the breach in some shape or other, more or less vague.”

**Persuade.** Sometimes misused for *advise*, thus : “ This is one reason why I never *persuade* young ladies to publish.”

**Peruse.** Often used when the more familiar word *read* would be the better word to use.

“ Suppose he were an enemy and hateful to me, should I still find pleasure in *the perusal of* his verses ? ” Better, “ in *reading* his verses.”

**Pitcher.** What in America is called a *pitcher*, in Great Britain is called a *jug*. It is to be hoped that no one will consider this information a sufficient reason for changing his practice, as *pitcher* is good old English. And then, we need the word *jug* to designate another vessel.

**Place.** Improperly used for *where* : “ Let’s go some *place* [where]. ” “ I want to go some *place* [where]. ”

**Phenomenon.** Plural, *phenomena*.

**Plead.** The imperfect tense and the perfect participle of the verb *to plead* are both *pleaded*, and not *plead*. “ He *pleaded* not guilty. ” “ You should have *pleaded* your cause with more fervor. ”



**Plenty.** In Worcester's Dictionary we find the following note: "*Plenty* is much used colloquially as an adjective, in the sense of *plentiful*, both in this country and in England; and this use is supported by respectable authorities, though it is condemned by various critics. Johnson says: 'It is used barbarously, I think, for *plentiful*'; and Dr. Campbell, in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, says: '*Plenty* for *plentiful* appears to me so gross a vulgarism that I should not have thought it worthy of a place here if I had not sometimes found it in works of considerable merit.'" We should say, then, that money is *plentiful*, and not that it is *plenty*.

"The days when deer and wolves were *plenty* [plentiful] in Illinois."—N. Y. Sun.

**Pleonasm.** Redundancy, or pleonasm, is the use of more words than are necessary to express the thought clearly. "They returned *back again* to the *same city from* whence they came *forth*": the five words in italics are *redundant*, or *pleonastic*. "The different departments of science and of art *mutually* reflect light *on each other* [one another]": either of the expressions in italics embodies the whole idea. "The *universal* opinion of *all men*" is a pleonastic expression often heard. "I wrote you *a letter* yesterday": here *a letter* is redundant.

Redundancy is *sometimes* permissible, to be surer of conveying the meaning, for emphasis, and in the language of poetic embellishment.

**Polite.** This word is much used by persons of doubtful culture, where those of the better sort use the word *kind*. We accept *kind*, not *polite*, invitations; and when any one has been obliging, we tell him that he has been *kind*; and when an interviewing reporter tells us of his having met with a *polite* reception, we may be sure that

the person by whom he has been received deserves well for his considerate kindness.

"I thank you and Mrs. Pope for my *kind* reception."—Atterbury.

**Portion.** This word is often incorrectly used for *part*. A *portion* is properly a part assigned, allotted, set aside for a special purpose; a share, a division. The verb *to portion* means, to divide, to parcel, to endow. We ask, therefore, "In what *part* [not in what *portion*] of the country, state, county, town, or street do you live?"—or, if we prefer grandiloquence to correctness, *reside*. In the sentence, "A large *portion* of the land is untilled," the right word would be either *part* or *proportion*, according to the intention of the writer.

**Posted.** A word very much and very inelegantly used for *informed*. Such expressions as, "I will *post* you," "I must *post* myself up," "If I had been better *posted*," and the like, are, at the best, but one remove from slang.

"*Posted*, or *well posted*, in the sense of well informed or instructed, learned, or well read, is slangy and shoppy—smelling of daybook and ledger."—Fitzgerald.

**Precisely similar.** "It was *precisely similar* to the accident that befell the same vessel last February."—N. Y. Sun.

This is a locution difficult to defend. *Precisely similar* equals *precisely resemblant*. The writer probably meant *very* similar, or similar in every respect.

**Predicate.** Often misused in the sense of *predict* or *foretell*; also in the sense of *to base* or *to found*. *Predicate* means to expect or to assume one thing to be the product or the outcome of another. Contentment is *predicated* of virtue. Good health is *predicated* of a good constitution.

Good manners and good morals are *predicated* of good training and good examples.

Here are some examples of the misuse of the word :

"It needed no ghost from the grave or rapping spirit from the invisible world to *predicate* [foretell] even then the success of young Disraeli in public life."

"When cholera is scourging the land, you may *predicate* [predict or foretell] as well as trace its progress."

"A man of whom it might be *predicated* [predicted] that his political power would [will] end with his political life."

"It is impossible to *predicate* [foretell] what he will or will not do."

"Being *predicated* [based or founded] on no previous proceedings of the Legislature."

"It ought surely to be *predicated* [based or founded] on a full and impartial consideration of the whole subject."

**Predict.** Sometimes misused for *predicate*, thus :

"There is no organ of which the concomitant mental feeling may be *predicted* [predicated] with greater confidence."

Dr. Hodgson, in his *Errors in the Use of English*, cites the following sentence as an example of the correct use of *predict* :

"Whether Mr. Campbell has so far surmounted all obstacles as to make these noble poems generally attractive to English readers, it might be rash to *predict*."

*Predict* must always be used in reference to what *is to be*, never to what *has been*. We can not *predict* backward. Change *has surmounted* to *will surmount*, and the use of *predict* will be justified ; but with the tense unchanged, *predict* must give place to *assert*, or to some other word of kindred meaning.

**Privilege.** Often misused for *right*. The true mean-

ing of *privilege* is not very generally understood. *Privileges*, unlike *rights*, are never general, never common ; they are always special, always peculiar. A "privileged character" is one to whom special liberties are granted. The young lady used the word properly when she said to the middle-aged man that attempted to kiss her, "You are pretty old, sir, but not old enough to be allowed any *privileges*."

The word is misused in the following sentences :

"Fox endeavored to secure the *privileges* [rights] and happiness of the people of Asia."

"If they could not claim this common *privilege* [right], what rights were left which [that] might not be withheld?"

"In the eighteenth century after Christ, England stood forth alone as an example to Europe of the *privileges* [rights] that might be enjoyed by subjects under a constitutional monarchy. How these *privileges* [rights] were acquired is matter of history."

"A whole people were called upon to exercise such a *privilege* [right] as that of universal suffrage."

**Prejudice—Prepossess.** Both these words mean to incline in one direction or the other for some reason not founded in justice ; but by common consent *prejudice* has come to be used in an unfavorable sense, and *prepossess* in a favorable sense. Thus we say, "He is *prejudiced* against him," and "He is *prepossessed* in his favor." We sometimes hear the expression, "He is *prejudiced* in his favor," but this can not be accounted a good use of the word.

**Prepositions.** The errors made in the use of the preposition are very numerous.

"The indolent child is one who [that] has a strong aversion *from* action of any sort."—Graham's English

Synonymes, p. 236. The prevailing and best modern usage is in favor of *to* instead of *from* after *averse* and *aversion*, and before the object. The words themselves include the idea of *from*.

"Clearness . . . enables the reader to see thoughts without noticing the language *with* which they are clothed."—Townsend's Art of Speech. We clothe thoughts *in* language.

"Shakespeare . . . and the Bible are . . . models *for* the English-speaking tongue."—Ibid. If this means models of English, then it should be *of*; but if it means models for English organs of speech to practice on, then it should be *for*; or if it means models to model English tongues after, then also it should be *for*.

"If the resemblance is too faint, the mind is fatigued *while* attempting to trace the analogies." "Aristotle is in error *while* thus describing governments."—Ibid. Here we have two examples, not of the misuse of the preposition, but of the erroneous use of the adverb *while* instead of the preposition *in*.

"For my part I can not think that Shelley's poetry, except *by* snatches and fragments, has the value of the good work of Wordsworth or Byron."—Matthew Arnold. Should be, "except *in* snatches."

"Taxes with us are collected nearly [almost] solely *from* real and personal estate."—Appletons' Journal. Taxes are levied *on* estates and collected *from* the owners.

"If I am not commended *for* the beauty of my works, I may hope to be pardoned for their brevity." Cobbett comments on this sentence as follows: "We may commend him *for* the beauty of his works, and we may *pardon* him *for* their brevity, if we deem the brevity *a fault*; but this is not what he means. He means that, at any rate, he

shall have the *merit* of brevity. ‘If I am not commended for the beauty of my works, I may hope to be pardoned *on account of* their brevity.’ This is what the doctor meant; but this would have marred a little the antithesis: it would have unsettled a little of the balance of that *seesaw* in which Dr. Johnson so much delighted, and which, falling into the hands of novel-writers and of members of Parliament, has, by moving unencumbered with any of the doctor’s reason or sense, lulled so many thousands asleep! Dr. Johnson created a race of writers and speakers. ‘Mr. Speaker, that the state of the nation is very critical, all men will allow; but that it is wholly desperate, few will believe.’ When you hear or see a sentence like this, be sure that the person who speaks or writes it has been reading Dr. Johnson, or some of his imitators. But, observe, these imitators go no further than the frame of the sentences. They, in general, take care not to imitate the doctor in knowledge and reasoning.”

The rhetoricians would have us avoid such forms of expression as, “The boy went *to* and asked the advice *of* his teacher”; “I called *on* and had a conversation *with* my brother.”

Very often the preposition is not repeated in a sentence when it should be. We say properly, “He comes from Ohio or *from* Indiana”; or, “He comes from *either* Ohio or Indiana.”

“Some authorities object to the use of a preposition as the final word of a sentence, but such usage is in accord with the genius of all the Teutonic languages.”—Standard Dictionary.

**Prepossess.** See PREJUDICE.

**Present—Introduce.** Few errors are more common, especially among those that are always straining to be fine.

than that of using *present*, in the social world, instead of *introduce*. *Present* means to place in the presence of a superior; *introduce*, to bring to be acquainted. A person is *presented* at court, and on an official occasion to our President; but persons that are unknown to each other are *introduced* by a common acquaintance. And in these introductions it is the younger that is introduced to the older; the lower to the higher in place or social position; the gentleman to the lady. A lady should say, as a rule, that Mr. Blank was introduced to her, not that she was introduced to Mr. Blank.

**Presumptive.** This word is sometimes misused by the careless for *presumptuous*.

**Preventive.** A useless and unwarranted syllable is sometimes added to this word, making *preventative*.

**Previous.** This adjective, in common with *subsequent*, *independent*, *relative*, *antecedent*, and possibly others, is often erroneously used as an adverb.

"*Previous* [previously] to the races at Monmouth Park yesterday," etc.—N. Y. Sun.

"The coaling steamer, Loch Garry, went into dock yesterday for inspection *previous* [previously] to being sent to her owners."

"The new police board is hard at work laying the foundation for reform quite *independent* [independently] of Albany."—Evening Sun.

"Should has also certain meanings *independent* [independently] of its relations as," etc.—Standard Dictionary.

"*Independently* of this reason, there was another about which," etc.—M. W. H. in N. Y. Sun.

"There is no tradition of the Earls of Derby making the castle their residence *subsequent* [subsequently] to the death of the Countess."

It is seldom really necessary to use any one of these adverbs; but if they are used, they should not be used in the adjective form.

**Procure.** This is a word much used by people that strive to be fine. "Where did you *get* it?" with them is, "Where did you *procure* it?"

**Profanity.** The extent to which some men habitually interlard their talk with oaths is disgusting even to many who, on occasion, do not themselves hesitate to give expression to their feelings in oaths portly and unctuous. If these fellows could be made to know how offensive to decency they make themselves, they would, perhaps, be less profane.

**Promise.** This word is sometimes very improperly used for *assure*; thus, "I *promise* you I was very much astonished."

"I shall get into Parliament this time, I *promise* [assure] you."

**Promote.** Should not be used when the thing advanced is evil. "He argues that pernicious reading *promotes* crime and should be excluded from libraries."

**Pronouns of the First Person.** "The ordinary uses of 'I' and 'we,' as the singular and plural pronouns of the first person, would appear to be above all ambiguity, uncertainty, or dispute. Yet when we consider the force of the plural 'we,' we are met with a contradiction; for, as a rule, only one person can speak at the same time to the same audience. It is only by some exceptional arrangement, or some latitude or license of expression, that several persons can be conjoint speakers. For example, a plurality may sing together in chorus, and may join in the responses at church, or in the simultaneous repetition of the Lord's Prayer or the Creed. Again, one person may be the au-



thorized spokesman in delivering a judgment or opinion held by a number of persons in common. Finally, in written compositions, the 'we' is not unsuitable, because a plurality of persons may append their names to a document.

"A speaker using 'we' may speak for himself and one or more others; commonly he stands forward as the representative of a class, more or less comprehensive. 'As soon as my companion and I had entered the field, *we* saw a man coming toward *us*'; '*we* like *our* new curate'; 'you do *us* poets the greatest injustice'; '*we* must see to the efficiency of *our* forces.' The widest use of the pronoun will be mentioned presently.

"'We' is used for 'I' in the decrees of persons in authority; as when King Lear says:

'Know that *we* have divided

In three *our* kingdom.'

By the fiction of plurality a veil of modesty is thrown over the assumption of vast superiority over human beings generally. Or, 'we' may be regarded as an official form whereby the speaker personally is magnified or enabled to rise to the dignity of the occasion.

"The editorial 'we' is to be understood on the same principle. An author using 'we' appears as if he were not alone, but sharing with other persons the responsibility of his views.

"This representative position is at its utmost stretch in the practice of using 'we' for human beings generally; as in discoursing on the laws of human nature. The preacher, the novelist, or the philosopher, in dwelling upon the peculiarity of our common constitution, being himself an example of what he is speaking of, associates the rest of mankind with him, and speaks collectively by means of 'we.'

'*We* are weak and fallible'; '*we* are of yesterday'; '*we* are doomed to dissolution.' 'Here have *we* no continuing city, but *we* seek one to come.'

"It is not unfrequent to have in one sentence, or in close proximity, both the editorial and the representative meaning, the effect being ambiguity and confusion. 'Let *us* [the author] now consider why *we* [humanity generally] overrate distant good.' In such a case the author should fall back upon the singular for himself, '*I* will now consider—.' '*We* [speaker] think *we* [himself and hearers together] should come to the conclusion.' Say either '*I* think,' or '*you* would.'

"The following extract from Butler exemplifies a similar confusion: 'Suppose *we* [representative] are capable of happiness and of misery in degrees equally intense and extreme, yet *we* [representative] are capable of the latter for a much longer time, beyond all comparison. *We* [change of subject to a limited class] see men in the tortures of pain—. Such is *our* [back to representative] make that anything may become the instrument of pain and sorrow to *us*.' The '*we*' at the commencement of the second sentence—'*We* see men in the tortures' could be advantageously changed to '*you*,' or the passive construction could be substituted; the remaining *we*'s would then be consistently representative.

"From the greater emphasis of singularity, energetic speakers and writers sometimes use '*I*' as representative of mankind at large. Thus: 'The current impressions received through the senses are not voluntary in origin. What *I* see in walking is seen because *I* have an organ of vision.' The question of general moral obligation is forcibly stated by Paley in the individual form, 'Why am *I* obliged to keep my word?' It is sometimes well to con-

fine the attention of the hearer or reader to his own relation to the matter under consideration, more especially in difficult or non-popular argument or exposition. The speaker, by using 'I,' does the action himself, or makes himself the example, the hearer being expected to put himself in the same position."—Bain's Composition Grammar.

**Pronouns of the Second Person.** "Anomalous usages have sprung up in connection with these pronouns. The plural form has almost wholly superseded the singular—a usage more than five centuries old.\*

"The motive is courtesy. The singling out of one person for address is supposed to be a liberty or an excess of familiarity; and the effect is softened or diluted by the fiction of taking in others. If our address is uncomplimentary, the sting is lessened by the plural form; and if the reverse, the shock to modesty is not so great. This is a refinement that was unknown to the ancient languages. The orators of Greece delighted in the strong, pointed, personal appeal implied in the singular 'thou.' In modern German, 'thou' (*Du*) is the address of familiarity and intimacy; while the ordinary pronoun is the curiously indirect 'they' (*Sie*). On solemn occasions we may revert to 'thou.' Cato, in his meditative soliloquy on reading Plato's views on the immortality of the soul, before killing himself, says: 'Plato, *thou* reasonest well.' So in the Commandments, 'thou' addresses to each individual an unavoidable appeal: '*Thou* shalt not——.' But our ordinary means of making the personal appeal is, 'You, *sir*,' 'You, *madam*,' 'My *Lord*, you——,' etc.; we reserve 'thou' for the special case of addressing the Deity. The application of the motive of courtesy is here reversed; it would be

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\* "The use of the plural for the singular was established as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century."—Morris, p. 118, § 153.

irreverent to merge this vast personality in a promiscuous assemblage.

“‘You’ is not unfrequently employed, like ‘we,’ as a representative pronoun. The action is represented with great vividness, when the person or persons addressed may be put forward as the performers: ‘There is such an echo among the old ruins and vaults, that if *you* stamp a little louder than ordinary [ordinarily] *you* hear the sound repeated’; ‘Some practice is required to see these animals in the thick forest, even when *you* hear them close by *you*.’

“There should not be a mixture of ‘thou’ and ‘you’ in the same passage. Thus, Thackeray (*Adventures of Philip*): ‘So, as *thy* sun rises, friend, over the humble house-tops round about *your* home, shall *you* wake many and many a day to duty and labor.’ So, Cooper (*Water-Witch*): ‘*Thou* hast both master and mistress? *You* have told us of the latter, but we would know something of the former. Who is *thy* master?’ Shakespeare, Scott, and others might also be quoted.

“‘Ye’ and ‘you’ were at one time strictly distinguished as different cases; ‘ye’ was nominative, ‘you’ objective (dative or accusative). But the Elizabethan dramatists confounded the forms irredeemably; and ‘you’ has gradually ousted ‘ye’ from ordinary use. ‘Ye’ is restricted to the expression of strong feeling, and in this employment occurs chiefly in the poets.”—Bain’s *Composition Grammar*.

**Proof.** This word is much and very improperly used for *evidence*, which is only the medium of *proof*, *proof* being the effect of *evidence*. “What *evidence* have you to offer in *proof* of the truth of your statement?” See also EVIDENCE.

**Propose—Purpose.** Writers and speakers often fail to discriminate properly between the respective meanings

of these two verbs. *Propose*, correctly used, means, to put forward or to offer *to be considered by others*; hence, a *proposal* is a scheme or design offered for acceptance or consideration, a proposition. *Purpose* means, to attend, to design, to resolve; hence, a *purpose* is an intention, an aim, that that one sets *before one's self*. Examples: "What do you *purpose* to do in the matter?" "What do you *propose* that we shall do in the matter?" "I will do" means "I *purpose* doing, or to do."

"I *purpose* to write a history of England from the accession of King James the Second down to a time which [that] is within the memory of men still living."—Macaulay. It will be observed that Macaulay says, "I *purpose to write*," and not, "I *purpose writing*," using the verb in the infinitive rather than in the participial form.

"On which he *purposed* to mount one of his little guns."

"The various street railway companies that *propose* [purpose] to profit by the provisions," etc.—Evening Telegram.

"The three gentlemen named have hired the Bijou Opera House for four weeks, and *propose* [purpose] to put on English opera in particularly good style."—N. Y. Times.

"I don't *propose* [intend] to be imposed on." See INFINITIVE; also INTEND.

**Proposition.** This word is often used when *proposal* would be better, for the reason that *proposal* has but one meaning, and is shorter by one syllable. "He demonstrated the *proposition* of Euclid, and rejected the *proposal* of his friend."

Correctly used: "Unless we are going to dispute the fundamental *proposition* that two and two make four," etc.

**Prosaist.** Dr. Fitz Edward Hall is of opinion that this

is a word we shall do well to encourage. It is used by good writers.

**Proven.** This form for the past participle of the verb *to prove* is said to be a Scotticism. It is not used by careful writers and speakers. The correct form is *proved*. "An irregular form, confined chiefly to law courts and documents."—Standard Dictionary.

**Providing.** The present participle of the verb *to provide* is sometimes improperly used for the conjunction *provided*, as in this sentence from the London Queen: "Society may be congratulated, . . . *providing* that," etc.

"Mr. Keene is now graciously permitted to send the trophy back to England *providing* [provided] he does so within thirty days from July 2d."—N. Y. Herald.

"The vox populi is the vox Dei *providing* [provided] the voice of the people . . . can be heard."—N. Y. Sun.

"This interesting young woman may accept gifts from married friends *providing* [provided] both husband and wife participate."—N. Y. Sun.

"He offered to provide a stable and supply the necessities of the company *providing* [provided] the control of the board should be turned over to him."—N. Y. Sun.

**Provoke.** See AGGRAVATE.

**Punctuation.** The importance of punctuation can not be overestimated; it not only helps to make plain the meaning of what one writes, but it may prevent one's being misconstrued. Though no two writers could be found that punctuate just alike, still in the main those that pay attention to the art put in their stops in essentially the same manner. The difference that punctuation may make in the meaning of language is well illustrated by the following anecdote:

At Ramessa there lived a benevolent and hospitable prior, who caused these lines to be painted over his door:

“Be open evermore,

O thou my door!

To none be shut—to honest or to poor!”

In time the good prior was succeeded by a man as selfish as his predecessor was generous. The lines over the door of the priory were allowed to remain; one stop, however, was altered, which made them read thus:

“Be open evermore,

O thou my door!

To none—be shut to honest or to poor!”

He punctuates best that makes his punctuation contribute most to the clear expression of his thought; and that construction is best that has least need of being punctuated.

THE COMMA.—The chief difference in the punctuation of different writers is usually in their use of the comma, in regard to which there is a good deal of latitude; much is left to individual taste. Nowadays the best practice uses it sparingly. An idea of the extent to which opinions differ with regard to the use of the comma may be formed from the following excerpt from a paper prepared by a skilled hand for private use:

“In the following examples, gathered from various sources—chiefly from standard books—the superfluous commas are inclosed in parentheses:

“1. ‘It remains(,) perhaps(,) to be said(,) that, if any lesson at all(,) as to these delicate matters(,) is needed(,) in this period, it is not so much a lesson,’ etc. 2. ‘The obedience is not due to the power of a right authority, but to the spirit of fear, and(,) therefore(,) is(,) in reality(,) no obedience at all.’ 3. ‘The patriot disturbances in Canada

. . . awakened deep interest among the people of the United States(,) who \* lived adjacent to the frontier.' 4. 'Observers(,) who \* have recently investigated this point(,) do not all agree,' etc. 5. 'The wind did(,) in an instant(,) what man and steam together had failed to do in hours.' 6. 'All the cabin passengers(,) situated beyond the center of the boat(,) were saved.' 7. 'No other writer has depicted(,) with so much art or so much accuracy(,) the habits, the manners,' etc. 8. 'If it shall give satisfaction to those who have(,) in any way(,) befriended it, the author will feel,' etc. 9. 'Formed(,) or consisting(,) of clay.' 10. 'The subject [witchcraft] grew interesting; and(,) to examine Sarah Cloyce and Elizabeth Proctor, the deputy governor(,) and five other magistrates(,) went to Salem.' 11. 'The Lusi-tanians(,) who † had not left their home(,) rose as a man,' etc. 12. 'Vague reports . . . had preceded him to Wash-ington, and his Mississippi friends(,) who chanced to be at the capital(,) were not backward to make their boast of him.' 13. 'Our faith has acquired a new vigor(,) and a clearer vision.' 14. 'In 1819(,) he removed to Cambridge.' 15. 'Doré was born at Strasburg(,) in 1832, and labors,' etc. 16. 'We should never apply dry compresses, charpie, or wadding(,) to the wound.' 17. '—to stand idle, to look, act, or think(,) in a leisurely way.' 18. '—portraits taken from the farmers, schoolmasters, and peasantry(,) of the neighborhood.' 19. '—gladly welcomed painters of Flanders, Holland, and Spain(,) to their shores.'

"In all these cases the clauses between or following

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\* A relative pronoun, used restrictively, should not be separated from its antecedent with any mark of punctuation.

† We can not tell whether this is a restrictive or a co-ordinating relative, consequently we can not tell whether the comma is required or not. Did all the Lusitanians rise, or only a part of them?



the inclosed commas are so closely connected grammatically with the immediately preceding words or phrases that they should be read without a perceptible pause, or with only a slight one for breath, without change of voice. Some of the commas would grossly pervert the meaning if strictly construed. Thus, from No. 3 it would appear that the people of the United States in general lived adjacent to the frontier; from No. 4, that all observers have recently investigated the point in question; from No. 6, that all the cabin passengers were so situated that they were saved, whereas it is meant that only a certain small proportion of them were saved; from No. 10 (Bancroft), that somebody whose name is accidentally omitted went to Salem 'to examine Sarah Cloyce and Elizabeth Proctor, the deputy governor, and five other magistrates'; from No. 11, that none of the Lusitanians had left their home, whereas it was the slaughter by the Romans of a great number of them who *had* left their home that caused the rising.

"Commas are frequently omitted, and in certain positions very generally, where the sense and correct reading require a pause. In the following examples, such commas, omitted in the works from which they were taken, are inclosed in brackets:

"1. 'The modes of thought[,] and the types of character which [that] those modes produce[,] are essentially and universally transformed.' 2. 'Taken by itself[,] this doctrine could have no effect whatever; indeed[,] it would amount to nothing but a verbal proposition.' 3. 'Far below[,] the little stream of the Oder foamed over the rocks.' 4. 'When the day returned[,] the professor, the artist[,] and I rowed to within a hundred yards of the shore.' 5. 'Proceeding into the interior of India[,] they passed through

Belgaum.' 6. 'If Loring is defeated in the Sixth District[,] it can be borne.'

"In No. 3, the reader naturally enunciates 'the little stream of the Oder' as in the objective case after 'below'; but there he comes to a predicate which [that] compels him to go back and read differently. In No. 4, it appears that 'the day returned the professor,' and then 'the artist and I rowed,' etc."

All clauses should commonly be isolated by commas; where, however, the connection is very close or the clause is very short, no point may be necessary. "But his pride is greater than his ignorance, and what he wants in knowledge he supplies by sufficiency." "A man of polite imagination can converse with a picture, and find an agreeable companion in a statue." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "The prince, his father being dead, succeeded." "To confess the truth, I was much at fault." "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee." "Where the bee sucks, there suck I." "His father dying, he succeeded to the estate." "The little that is known, and the circumstance that little is known, must be considered as honorable to him."

The comma is used before and after a phrase when coordinating and not restrictive. "The jury, having retired for half an hour, brought in a verdict." "The stranger, unwilling to obtrude himself on our notice, left in the morning." "Rome, the city of the emperors, became the city of the popes." "His stories, which made everybody laugh, were often made to order." "He did not come, which I greatly regret." "The younger, who was yet a boy, had nothing striking in his appearance." "They passed the cup to the stranger, who drank heartily." "Peace at any price, which these orators seem to advo-

cate, means war at any cost." "Sailors, who are commonly superstitious, say it is unlucky to embark on Friday."

Adverbs and short phrases, *when they break the connection*, should be between commas. Some of the most common words and phrases so used are the following: Also, too, there, indeed, perhaps, surely, moreover, likewise, however, finally, namely, therefore, apparently, meanwhile, consequently, unquestionably, accordingly, notwithstanding, in truth, in fact, in short, in general, in reality, no doubt, of course, as it were, at all events, to be brief, to be sure, now and then, on the contrary, in a word, by chance, in that case, in the meantime, for the most part. "History, in a word, is replete with moral lessons." "As an orator, however, he was not great." "There is, remember, a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue." "Our civilization, therefore, is not an unmixed good." "This, I grant you, is not of great importance."

If, however, the adverb does not break the connection, but readily coalesces with the rest of the sentence, the commas are omitted. "Morning will come at last, however dark the night may be." "We then proceeded on our way." "Our civilization is therefore not an unmixed good." "Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change."

Adverbial phrases and clauses beginning a sentence are set off by commas. "In truth, I could not tell." "To sum up, the matter is this." "Everything being ready, they set out." "By looking a little deeper, the reason will be found." "Finally, let me sum up the argument." "If the premises were admitted, I should deny the conclusion." "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Words used in apposition should be isolated by com-

mas. "Newton, the great mathematician, was very modest." "And he, their prince, shall rank among my peers." In such sentences, however, as "The mathematician Newton was very modest," and "The Emperor Napoleon was a great soldier," commas are not used.

The name or designation of a person addressed is isolated by commas. "It touches you, my lord, as well as me." "John, come here." "Mr. President, my object is peace." "Tell me, boy, where do you live?" "Yes, sir, I will do as you say." "Mr. Brown, what is your number?"

Pairs of words: "Old and young, rich and poor, wise and foolish, were involved." "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and heart to this vote." "Interest and ambition, honor and shame, friendship and enmity, gratitude and revenge, are the prime movers in public transactions."

A restrictive clause is not separated by a comma from the noun. "Every one must love a boy who [that] is attentive and docile." "He preaches sublimely who lives a holy life." "The things which [that] are seen are temporal." "A king depending on the support of his subjects can not rashly go to war." "The sailor who [that] is not superstitious will embark any day."

The comma is used after adjectives, nouns, and verbs in sentences like the following:

"Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils

Shrunk to this little measure?"

"He fills, he bounds, connects and equals all."

"Who to the enraptured heart, and ear, and eye

Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and melody."\*

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\* "Some writers omit the comma in cases where the conjunction is used. But, as the conjunction is generally employed in such cases for

"He rewarded his friends, chastised his foes, set Justice on her seat, and made his conquest secure."

The comma is used to separate adjectives in opposition, but closely connected. "Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull." "Liberal, not lavish, is kind Nature's hand." "Though black, yet comely; and though rash, benign."

After a nominative, where the verb is understood. "To err is human; to forgive, divine." "A wise man seeks to shine in himself; a fool, in others." "Conversation makes a ready man; writing, an exact man; reading, a full man."

A long subject is often separated from the predicate by a comma. "Any one that refuses to earn an honest livelihood, is not an object of charity." "The circumstance of his being unprepared to adopt immediate and decisive measures, was represented to the Government." "That he had persistently disregarded every warning and persevered in his reckless course, had not yet undermined his credit with his dupes." "That the work of forming and perfecting the character is difficult, is generally allowed."

In a series of adjectives that precede their noun, a comma is placed after each except the last; there usage omits the point. "A beautiful, tall, willowy, sprightly girl." "A quick, brilliant, studious, learned man."\*

A comma is placed between short members of com-

emphasis, commas ought to be used; although where the words are very closely connected, or where they constitute a clause in the midst of a long sentence, they may be omitted."—Bigelow's Handbook of Punctuation.

\* "This usage violates one of the fundamental principles of punctuation; it indicates, very improperly, that the noun *man* is more closely connected with *learned* than with the other adjectives. Analogy and perspicuity require a comma after *learned*."—Quackenbos.

pound sentences connected by *and*, *but*, *for*, *nor*, *or*, *because*, *whereas*, *that* expressing purpose (so that, in order that), and other conjunctions. "Be virtuous, that you may be respected." "Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty." "Man proposes, but God disposes."

A comma must not be placed before *that* except when it is equivalent to *in order that*. "He says that he will be here."

A comma must not be placed before *and* when it connects two words only. "Time and tide wait for no man." "A rich and prosperous people." "Plain and honest truth wants no artificial covering."

A comma is sometimes necessary to prevent ambiguity. "He who [that] pursues pleasure only defeats the object of his creation." Without a comma before or after *only*, the meaning of this sentence is doubtful.

The following sentences present some miscellaneous examples of the use of the comma by writers on punctuation: "Industry, as well as genius, is essential to the production of great works." "Prosperity is secured to a state, not by the acquisition of territory or riches, but by the encouragement of industry." "Your manners are affable, and, for the most part, pleasing."\*

"However fairly a bad man may appear to act, we distrust him." "Why, this is rank injustice!" "Well, follow the dictates of your inclination." "The comma may be omitted in the case of *too*, *also*, *therefore*, and *perhaps*, when introduced so as not to interfere with the harmonious flow of the period; and, particularly, when the sentence is short."† "Robert Horton, M. D., F. R. S." "To those who [that] labor, sleep is doubly pleasant." "Sleep is

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\* Many writers would omit the last two commas in this sentence.

† The commas before and after *particularly* are hardly necessary.

doubly pleasant to those who [that] labor." "Those who [that] persevere, succeed." "To be overlooked, slighted, and neglected; to be misunderstood, misrepresented, and slandered; to be trampled under foot by the envious, the ignorant, and the vile; to be crushed by foes, and to be distrusted and betrayed even by friends—such is too often the fate of genius." "She is tall, though not so handsome as her sister." "Verily, verily, I say unto you." "Whatever is, is right." "What is foreordained to be, will be." "The Emperor Augustus was a patron of the fine arts." "Augustus, the Emperor, was a patron of the fine arts." "United, we stand; divided, we fall." "God said, Let there be light." "July 21, 1881." "President Garfield was shot, Saturday morning, July 2, 1881; he died, Monday night, Sept. 19, 1881." "I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant, John Jones." "New York, August, 1881." "Room 20, Equitable Building, Broadway, New York."

*"When you are in doubt as to the propriety of inserting commas, omit them; IT IS BETTER TO HAVE TOO FEW THAN TOO MANY."*—Quackenbos.

THE SEMICOLON.—Reasons are preceded by semicolons: "Economy is no disgrace; for it is better to live on a little than to outlive a great deal." Clauses in opposition are separated by a semicolon when the second is introduced by an adversative: "Straws swim at the surface; but pearls lie at the bottom." "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight." Without the adversative, the colon is to be preferred: "Prosperity showeth vice: adversity, virtue." The great divisions of a sentence must be pointed with a semicolon when the minor divisions are pointed with commas: "Mirth should be the embroidery of conversation, not the

web ; and wit the ornament of the mind, not the furniture." The things enumerated must be separated by semicolons when the enunciation of particulars is preceded by a colon : "The value of a maxim depends on four things : the correctness of the principle it embodies ; the subject to which it relates ; the extent of its application ; and the ease with which it may be practically carried out." When *as* introduces an example, it is preceded by a semicolon. When several successive clauses have a common connection with a preceding or following clause, they are separated by semicolons ; as, "Children, as they gambled on the beach ; reapers, as they gathered the harvest ; mowers, as they rested from using the scythe ; mothers, as they busied themselves about the household—were victims to an enemy who [that] disappeared the moment a blow was struck." "Reason as we may, it is impossible not to read in such a fate much that we know not how to interpret ; much of provocation to cruel deeds and deep resentment ; much of apology for wrong and perfidy ; much of doubt and misgiving as to the past ; much of painful recollection ; much of dark foreboding." "Philosophers assert that Nature is unlimited ; that her treasures are endless ; that the increase of knowledge will never cease."

THE COLON.—This point is less used now than formerly : its place is supplied by the period, the semicolon, or the dash ; and sometimes even by the comma. The colon is used very differently by different writers. "He was heard to say, 'I have done with this world.'" Some writers would put a colon, some a comma, after *say*. "When the quoted passage is brought in without any introductory word, if short," says Quackenbos, "it is generally preceded by a comma ; if long, by a colon ; as, 'A simpleton, meeting a philosopher, asked him, 'What affords



wise men the greatest pleasure?" Turning on his heel, the sage replied, "To get rid of fools."'"

Formal enumerations of particulars, and direct quotations, when introduced by such phrases as *in these words*, *as follows*, *the following*, *namely*, *this*, *these*, *thus*, etc., are properly preceded by a colon. "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." "Lord Bacon has summed up the whole matter in the following words: 'A little philosophy inclineth men's minds to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds to religion.'" "The human family is composed of five races: first, the Caucasian; second, the Mongolian; third, the," etc.

"All were attentive to the godlike man,  
When from his lofty couch he thus began:  
'Great queen,' " etc.—Dryden.

When the quotation, or other matter, begins a new paragraph, the colon is, by many writers, followed with a dash; as "The cloth being removed, the President rose and said:—

" 'Ladies and gentlemen, we are,' " etc.

The colon is used to mark the greater breaks in sentences when the lesser breaks are marked by semicolons. "You have called yourself an atom in the universe; you have said that you are but an insect in the solar blaze: is your present pride consistent with these professions?" "A clause is either independent or dependent: independent, if it forms an assertion by itself; dependent, if it enters into some other clause with the value of a part of speech."

A colon is sometimes used instead of a period to separate two short sentences that are closely connected. "Never

flatter people : leave that to such as mean to betray them." "Some things we can, and others we can not do : we can walk, but we can not fly."

THE PERIOD.—Complete sentences are always followed either by a period, or by an exclamation or an interrogation point.\*

The period is also used after abbreviations ; as, R. D. Van Nostrand, St. Louis, Mo. ; Jno. B. Morris, M. D., F. R. S., London, Eng. ; Jas. W. Wallack, Jr., New York City, N. Y. ; Jas. B. Roberts, Elocutionist, Phila., Pa.

INTERROGATION POINT.—This point is used after questions put by the writer, and after questions reported directly. "What can I do for you ?" "Where are you going ?" "'What do you say ?' cried the General." "The child still lives ?" It should not be used when the question is reported indirectly. "He asked me where I was going." "The Judge asked the witness if he believed the man to be guilty."

EXCLAMATION POINT.—This mark is placed after interjections, after sentences and clauses of sentences of passionate import, and after solemn invocations and addresses. "Zounds ! the man's in earnest." "Pshaw ! what can we do ?" "Bah ! what's that to me ?" "Indeed ! then I must look to it." "Look, my lord, it comes !" "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit !" "O heat, dry up my brains !" "Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia !" "While in this part of the country, I once more revisited—and, alas, with what melancholy presentiments !—the home of my youth." "O rose of May !" "Oh, from this time forth, my thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth !" "O heavens ! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet ?" °

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\* The only exception to this rule is the occasional use of the colon to separate two short sentences that are closely connected.

“ Night, sable goddess ! from her ebon throne,  
 In rayless majesty now stretches forth  
 Her leaden scepter o’er a slumbering world.  
 Silence, how dead ! and darkness, how profound ! ”

Young.

“ Hail, holy light ! offspring of heaven just born ! ”

Milton.

“ But thou, O Hope ! with eyes so fair,  
 What was thy delighted measure ? ”—Collins.

It will be observed that the interjection O is an exception to the rule : it is often followed by a comma, but never by an exclamation point.

An exclamation point sometimes gives the same words quite another meaning. The difference between “ What’s that ? ” and “ What’s that ! ” is obvious.

THE DASH.—Cobbett did not favor the use of this mark, as we see from the following : “ Let me caution you against the use of what, by some, is called the *dash*. The dash is a stroke along the line ; thus, ‘ I am rich—I was poor—I shall be poor again.’ This is wild work indeed ! Who is to know what is intended by these *dashes* ? Those who [that] have thought proper, like Mr. Lindley Murray, to place the *dash* among the *grammatical points*, ought to give us some rule relative to its different longitudinal dimensions in different cases. The *inch*, the *three-quarter inch*, the *half inch*, the *quarter inch* : these would be something determinate ; but ‘ *the dash*,’ without measure, must be a perilous thing for the young grammarian to handle. In short, ‘ *the dash*’ is a cover for ignorance as to the use of points, and it can answer no other purpose.”

This is one of the few instances in which Cobbett was wrong. The *dash* is the proper point with which to mark an unexpected or emphatic pause, or a sudden break or

transition. It is very often preceded by another point. "And Huitzilopochtli—a sweet name to roll under one's tongue—for how many years has this venerable war-god blinked in the noonday sun!" "Crowds gathered about the newspaper bulletins, recalling the feverish scenes that occurred when the President's life was thought to be hanging by a thread. 'Wouldn't it be too bad,' said one, 'if, after all—— no, I won't allow myself to think of it.'" "Was there ever—— but I scorn to boast." "You are—— no, I'll not tell you what you are."

"He suffered—but his pangs are o'er ;

Enjoyed—but his delights are fled ;

Had friends—his friends are now no more ;

And foes—his foes are dead."—Montgomery.

"Greece, Carthage, Rome—where are they?" "He chastens ;—but he chastens to save."

Dashes are much used where parentheses were formerly employed. "In the days of Tweed the expression to divide fair—forcible, if not grammatical—acquired much currency." "In truth, the character of the great chief was depicted two thousand five hundred years before his birth, and depicted—such is the power of genius—in colors which [that] will be fresh as many years after his death." "To render the Constitution perpetual—which God grant it may be !—it is necessary that its benefits should be practically felt by all parts of the country."

PARENTHESIS.—This mark is comparatively little used nowadays. The dash is preferred, probably because it disfigures the page less. The office of the parenthesis is to isolate a phrase that is merely incidental, and that might be omitted without detriment to the grammatical construction.

"Know then this truth (enough for man to know),

Virtue alone is happiness below."—Pope.

"The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)  
Is not to act or think beyond mankind."

BRACKETS are used principally to inclose words improperly omitted by the writer, or words introduced for the purpose of explanation or to correct an error. Brackets are often used in this book to correct errors.

THE APOSTROPHE.—This point is used to denote the omission of letters and sometimes of figures ; as, Jan'y, '81 ; *I've* for *I have* ; *you'll* for *you will* ; *'tis* for *it is* ; *don't* for *do not* ; *can't* for *can not* ; it was in the year '93 ; the spirit of '76 ; it was in the years 1812, '13, and '14.

Also to denote the possessive case ; as, Brown's house ; the king's command ; Moses's staff ; for conscience' sake ; the boys' garden.

Also with *s* to denote the plural of letters, figures, and signs ; as, Cross your *t*'s, dot your *i*'s, and mind your *p*'s and *q*'s ; make your 5's better, and take out the *x*'s.

CAPITALS.—A capital letter should begin every sentence, every line of verse, and every direct quotation.

All names of the Deity, of Jesus Christ, of the Trinity, and of the Virgin Mary must begin with a capital. Pronouns are usually capitalized when they refer to the Deity.

Proper names, and nouns and adjectives formed from proper names, names of streets, of the months, of the days of the week, and of the holidays, are capitalized.

Titles of nobility and of high office, when used to designate particular persons, are capitalized ; as, The Earl of Dunraven ; the Mayor of Boston ; the Baron replied ; the Cardinal presided.

THE PARAGRAPH.—In writing for the press, the division of matter into paragraphs is often quite arbitrary ; in letter-writing, on the contrary, the several topics treated of should, as a rule, be isolated by paragraphic divisions. These di-

visions give one's letters a shapely appearance that they otherwise never have.

**Purchase.** This word is much preferred to its synonym *buy*, by that class of persons that prefer the word *reside* to *live*, *procure* to *get*, *inaugurate* to *begin*, and so on. They are usually of those that are great in pretense, and that would be greater still if they were to pretend to all they have to pretend to.

**Purpose.** See PROPOSE ; also INTEND.

**Put up.** We sometimes find slang where we least expect to find it.

"The watch will be handed to Mr. Dutcher on his return to Brooklyn. A few of his Republican friends, it is understood, *put up* the money that was paid for its return."—N. Y. Sun.

**Quantity.** This word is often improperly used for *number*. *Quantity* should be used in speaking of what is measured or weighed ; *number*, of what is counted. Examples : "What *quantity* of apples have you, and what *number* of pineapples?" "Delaware produces a large *quantity* of peaches and a great *number* of melons."

**Quit.** This word means, properly, to leave, to go away from, to forsake ; as, "Avaunt ! *quit* my sight !" This is the only sense in which the English use it. In America, it is commonly used in the sense of to leave off, to stop ; as, "*Quit* your nonsense" ; "*Quit* laughing" ; "*Quit* your noise" ; "He has *quit* smoking," and so on.

**Quite.** This word originally meant completely, perfectly, totally, entirely, fully ; and this is the sense it was used in by the early writers of English. It is now often used in the sense of *rather* ; as, "It is *quite* warm" ; "She is *quite* tall" ; "He is *quite* proficient." Sometimes it is incorrectly used in the sense of *considerable* ; as, *quite* an

amount, *quite* a number, *quite* a fortune. *Quite*, according to good modern usage, may qualify an adjective, but not a noun. "She is *quite* the lady" is a vile phrase, meaning, "She is very or *quite* ladylike."

"*Quite* often holds in signification a place intermediate between *altogether* and *somewhat*. The French *assez* and the Italian *assai* have a similar acceptation."—Hall.

**Railroad Depot.** Few things are more offensive to fastidious ears than to hear a railway *station* called a *depot*. A depot is properly a place where goods or stores of any kind are kept; and the places at which the trains of a railroad—or, better, railway—stop for passengers, or the points they start from and arrive at, are properly the *stations*.

**Railway.** The English prefer this word to *railroad*, and it is growing in favor in this country.

**Raise.** This word is much misused in the sense of *rear*. Properly, we *rear* children and *raise* animals.

**Raise the rent.** An expression incorrectly used for *increase the rent*.

**Rare.** "Our request for information," says the Academy, "as to the use of the word *rare* in the sense of *underdone* has brought us so many letters that we can acknowledge them only *en masse*. That a so-called 'Americanism' should turn out to be genuine English vernacular is no new thing; but we confess to surprise that this particular word should be common almost throughout the length and breadth of the country, and in Ireland as well. From Scotland we have heard nothing."

**Rarely.** It is no uncommon thing to see this adverb improperly used in such sentences as, "It is very *rarely* that the puppets of the romancer assume," etc.—Appletons' Journal. "But," says the defender of this phraseology, "*rarely* qualifies a verb—the verb *to be*." Not at all. The

sentence, if written out in full, would be, "It is a very rare thing that," etc.; or, "The circumstance is a very rare one that," etc.; or, "It is a very rare occurrence that," etc. To those that contend for "It is very *rarely* that," etc., I would say, It is very *sadly* that persons of culture will write and then defend—or rather try to defend—such grammar.

"So *rarely* [rare] is it that any exploration of the upper atmosphere can be made that one of the thermal observations recorded by," etc.—N. Y. Herald.

"It is *rarely* [rare] that one hears of so homogeneous a family."—N. Y. Tribune.

"'It is very *rarely* [rare] that a mother comes here to look for her child,' remarked one of the attendants at the Foundling Asylum."—N. Y. Herald.

*Rarely* is sometimes misused for exceedingly; thus, "The evening was *rarely* enjoyable."

**Ratiocinate.** See EFFECTUATE. See page 324.

**Real.** This adjective is often vulgarly used in the sense of the adverb *very*; thus, *real* nice, *real* pretty, *real* angry, *real* cute, and so on.

**Recommend.** This word, which means, to commend or praise to another, to declare worthy of esteem, trust, or favor, is sometimes put to strange uses. Example: "Resolved, That the taxpayers of the county be *recommended* to meet," etc. What the resolving gentleman meant was, that the taxpayers should be *counseled* to meet.

**Redundancy.** See PLEONASM.

**Reflexive Pronouns.** The reflexive pronouns *myself*, *yourself*, etc., should not be used for *I*, *you*, etc. They have a meaning peculiar to themselves, and are not true nominatives. Formerly the personal pronouns were used reflexively, "I never did repent *me* doing good." The addition of *self* only rendered them more emphatic. *Self*



was an adjective meaning *same*. "I *myself* will do it" equals "I *the same* will do it." *Myself* and *yourself* are incorrectly used in the following sentences :

"Mr. S. and *myself* [I] decided to take one man apiece."

"Mr. H. and *myself* [I] never enjoyed anything more."

"It is true that, at the assembling of Parliament, *yourself* [you], and many other independent members, were unwilling," etc.

Nowadays, the reflexive pronouns are properly used for emphasis only.

**Relative Pronouns.** See THAT, WHICH, WHO.

**Relative—Relation.** In speaking of one's kindred, the better of these two words to use is *relative*. "Our near and dear *relatives* are the first objects of our regard."

**Reliable.** The following defense of this word is taken from the Imperial Dictionary, published by The Century Company. I quote the entire definition, which may be accepted as the latest English authority on the subject :

"Such as may be relied on ; fit or worthy to be relied on ; to be depended on. This word has been again and again attacked by different writers, having been at various times stigmatized as an Americanism, as irregular in formation, as unnecessary, as vulgar, and what not. Against such charges, however, it has found able defenders, the most notable of whom is Mr. Fitz-Edward Hall, in his little work *On English Adjectives in -able*, with Special Reference to *Reliable*. The first instance of its use as known to him was in a paper written by Coleridge to the *Morning Post* in 1800, the expression in which it occurs being 'the best means, and most *reliable* pledge.' Coleridge used it repeatedly afterward ; and it has also been used by many good writers since. It is now, indeed, of every-day occurrence, though no doubt certain persons still

object to the use of it. Among those who have employed it Mr. Hall mentions Rev. James Martineau, Mr. Gladstone, Dr. Newman, Mr. John Stuart Mill, Dr. Henry Maudsley, Bishop Wilberforce, Dean Mansel, Harriet Martineau, and Mr. Leslie Stephen—names surely sufficient to support any one who chooses to use the vocable in question. That it is unnecessary is not quite the fact ; at least we can hardly admit that its place is already sufficiently occupied by *trustworthy* or *trusty*, as is usually stated. ‘If this were true,’ says Mr. Hall, ‘inasmuch as we have *trust*, verb and substantive, there would be no need of *rely* and *reliance* ; they must be wholly superfluous. But we *rely* where we look for support ; we *trust* where we apprehend no deception ; and *reliable* and *trustworthy* or *trusty*, properly employed, are no less different than their respective verbs. In corollary to this, *rely*, except metaphorically, has not a personal reference, whereas *trust* has ; and the best writers who have hitherto practically accepted *reliable* have applied it to things solely. That many persons use *reliable* instead of *trustworthy* is, of course, no ground for rejecting it.’ That it is formed after a somewhat uncommon model is also no sufficient ground for rejecting it, when we find in good use such words as *available*, such as one may avail one’s self *of* ; *conversable*, such as may be conversed *with* ; *dispensable*, that may be dispensed *with*—and similarly *indispensable* ; *laughable*, worthy of being laughed *at*, and sundry others. Altogether, it seems too late in the day to protest against the use of the word now ; those who do not like it can let it alone ; but, as Prof. Whitney remarks (the quotation is from Mr. Hall) : ‘We have had to swallow too many linguistic camels, to want to make life more uncomfortable by straining at such gnats as that.’”

**Remainder.** See BALANCE.

**Remember—Recollect.** The careless employ these two words as though they were interchangeable, yet each has, properly, its distinctive signification. “Do you *remember* what I said to you?” “*Can* you *recollect* what I said to you?” We *remember* without effort; we *recollect* after some exertion. We should say, therefore, “I do not remember,” and “I *can* not recollect.”

**Rendition.** This word is much misused for *rendering*. Example: “The excellence of Mr. Gilbert’s *rendition* of certain characters—Sir Peter and Sir Antony, for instance—is not equaled,” etc. *Rendition* means the act of yielding possession, surrender, as the *rendition* of a town or fortress. The sentence above should read, “The excellence of Mr. Gilbert’s *rendering*,” etc. *Rendition* is also sometimes improperly used for *performance*.

**Repetition.** Many writers are studious to avoid repeating words, and always use a synonym if they can find one. Instances are met with in which Shakespeare’s diction would be better had he re-used words already employed. Here is one:

“Speak the speech, I pray you, as I *pronounced* [spoke] it to you.”

“A carriage is a wheeled vehicle for carrying persons, in distinction from *those* [vehicles] used for *transporting* [carrying] goods.”—Standard Dictionary.

“The young people replied as other lovers have *done* [replied] since the world *commenced* [began].”

“Grave doubt is expressed whether the new-woman movement may not be a retrograde *one* [movement].”

“You see it is the same principle as the ability to tell a man of good habits from a *dissipated person* [man of bad habits].”

Often the preposition should be repeated when it is not.

"The finances of an empire or [of] an individual."—Standard Dictionary.

Sometimes the adjective should have been repeated. Here is an instance :

"It is a wondrous thing, the human foot—like the human hand ; even more *so* [wondrous], perhaps."

"It is not, however, by what he accomplished, but by what he tried to *do* [accomplish], and by what he was," etc.

"The appellation *caitiff*, which implies at present, and has *done so* for a long time," etc. : read, "and for a long time has implied."

**Replace.** Quite frequently used when *take the place of* would better the diction.

"Nothing in London has yet *replaced* [taken the place of] what was the habitual society of Holland House."

"Tragedy ceased with Rachel ; comedy has still Regnier, Got, Provost, and Madame Plessy ; but who is to *replace them* [take their places] ?"

"If Sydenham had to *replace* Locke [take the place of Locke, or, take Locke's place] as family physician at Exeter House, it is not unlikely that he practiced elsewhere."

Often quite incorrectly used instead of *displace*.

"We are sorry to see that Prof. Rawlinson talks of '*replacing* the Handbuch of Heeren by [with] a manual conceived on the same scale.' The vulgarism, 'to replace A by [with] B' in the sense of 'to put B in the place of A,' threatens soon to become as common as those odious expressions, '*those sort of things*,' and '*like I do*.'"—Athenæum.

**Reply.** See ANSWER. See page 324.

**Reputation.** See CHARACTER.

**Reside.** A big word that Mr. Wouldbe uses where Mr. Is uses the little word *live*.

**Residence.** In speaking of a man's domicile, it is not only in better taste but more correct to use the term *house* than *residence*. A man has a *residence* in New York when he has lived here long enough to have the right to exercise the franchise here; and he may have a *house* in Fifth Avenue where he *lives*. People that *are* live in houses; people that *would be* reside in residences. The former *buy* things; the latter *purchase* them.

**Rest.** See BALANCE.

**Restive.** Some of the dictionaries, Richard Grant White, and some other writers, contend that this word, when properly used, means unwilling to go, standing still stubbornly, obstinate, stubborn, and nothing else. In combating this opinion, Fitz-Edward Hall says: "Very few instances, I apprehend, can be produced from our literature of this use of *restive*." Webster gives impatient, uneasy, as a second meaning; and this is the sense in which the word is nearly always used.

The Standard Dictionary's definition of *restive* is, "Characterized by restlessness, with impatience of control; moving restlessly about; fidgety; as, a *restive* colt; the noise made the horse *restive*."

**Resurrect.** Persons that are at all fastidious in selecting their words will assuredly not use this word in the sense of remove from the grave; disinter.

"Our correspondent complains that he has seen the word *resurrect* in The Sun. If this be so, it was an error that we never noticed, and we now take it back and are sorry for it. In so saying, we enjoy the high satisfaction peculiar to one who is willing to confess his wrong."—N. Y. Sun.

**Retire.** It is only the overnice that use *retire* in the sense of *go to bed*.

**Reverend—Honorable.** Many persons are in doubt whether they should or should not put *the* before *these* adjectives. Emphatically, yes, they should. See *Words and Their Uses*, by Richard Grant White, for a full discussion of the question; also *Good English*, by Edward S. Gould.

**Rhetoric.** The art that has for its object the rendering of language effective is called *rhetoric*. Without some study of the art of composition no one can expect to write well, or intelligently to judge the literary work of others.

"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,  
As those move easiest who have learned to dance."

**Ride—Drive.** Fashion, both in England and in this country, says that we must always use *drive* when we speak of going out in a carriage, although *ride* means, according to all the lexicographers, "To be carried on a horse or other animal, or in any kind of vehicle or carriage."

"The distinction sought to be made between *ride* and *drive*, besides being nonsensical, is an aping of an English custom for which we have no taste."—The Examiner.

**Right.** Singularly enough, this word is made, by some people, to do service for *ought*, *in duty bound*, *under obligation to*; thus, "You had a *right* to tell me," meaning, "You should have told me." "The Colonists contended that they *had no right* to pay taxes" meaning, "They were *under no obligation* to pay taxes"—i. e., that it was unjust to tax them.

The use of *right* in this sense is offensive to all the senses.

**Rolling.** The use of this participial adjective in the sense of undulating is said to be an Americanism.

Whether an Americanism or not, it would seem to be quite unobjectionable.

**Rubbers.** This word, in common with *gums* and *art-tics*, is often, in defiance of good taste, used for *overshoes*.

**Rugged.** The use of this word in the sense of *hardy*, *robust*, is not sanctioned by the best usage ; it is an Americanism. *Rugged*, when properly used, means, rough, uneven, rude, inharmonious. What is *rugged* has greater irregularities than what is *rough*.

**Run.** The imperfect tense of the verb *to run* is *ran*, and not *run* ; and the past participle of *to run* is *run*.

"Yesterday, as *I ran* to town, I should have *run* faster if I had known it was so late."

**Sabbath.** This term was first used in English for Sunday, or Lord's Day, by the Puritans. Nowadays it is little used in this sense. The word to use is *Sunday*.

**Same.** This word, like *former* and *latter* and the pronouns, should be used as sparingly as possible. Here is a sentence that it weakens :

"What reformers of this nation want is a chance to appeal from the sovereign people, debauched by the gin-mills, to the *same* [sovereign] people sober."

The diction is greatly improved by repeating the word *sovereign*.

**Sarcasm.** Bain says that *sarcasm* is vituperation softened in the outward expression by the arts and figures of disguise—epigram, innuendo, irony—and embellished with the figures of illustration. Crabb says that *sarcasm* is the indulgence only of personal resentment, and is never justifiable.

**Satire.** The holding up to ridicule of the follies and weaknesses of mankind, by way of rebuke, is called *satire*. Satire is general rather than individual, its object being to

reform abuses. A *lampoon*, which has been defined as a *personal satire*, attacks the individual rather than his fault, and is intended to injure rather than to reform.

Said Sheridan: "Satires and lampoons on particular people circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties than by printing them."

**Satisfy.** This word is often unnecessarily, if not absolutely improperly, used in the sense of *convince*; thus, "The victim of your wiles is clearly under fourteen years of age, and the Court is *satisfied* that it was your intention to abandon the child after you had accomplished your purpose."

**Saw.** The imperfect tense of the verb *to see* is carelessly used by good writers and speakers when they should use the perfect; thus, "I never *saw* anything like it before," when the meaning intended is, "I *have* never [in all my life] *seen* anything like it before [i. e., until now]." We say properly, "I never *saw* anything like it *when I was in Paris*"; but when the period of time referred to extends to the time when the statement is made, it must be *have seen*. Like mistakes are made in the use of other verbs, but they are hardly as common; yet we often hear such expressions as, "I *was* never in Philadelphia," "I never *went* to the theater in my life," instead of *have been* in Philadelphia, and *have gone* to the theater. See IMPERFECT TENSE and TENSE.

**Scholar—Pupil.** "Webster gives as the first meaning of scholar, 'one who attends a school; one who learns of a teacher'; and he further makes the distinction between scholar and pupil as follows: 'A scholar is one who is under instruction; a pupil is one who is under the immediate and personal care of an instructor.' *Scholar* and *pupil*, although subject to the distinction thus drawn by Webster,



are nevertheless given by him as synonymous. In general conversation they are almost universally used as interchangeable words.

"It would be a reform in the use of the word if *scholar* could be limited to learned persons, and *pupil* limited to youths or others under instruction."—Public Ledger, Philadelphia.

**Science.** "This word is getting to be woefully misused. The New York School Journal cries out indignantly because 'The Post of this city has discovered that education is not a science—only an art.' This the Journal calls 'belittling' education. A writer in The Popular Science Monthly (July, 1891) says 'the science of agriculture must always be the mother of its art.' Three books have been published in England recently having respectively the titles, The Art and Science of Brewing, The Science and Art of Butter-making, and Science and Practice of Stock-Exchange Speculation. Then, too, a prize-fighter often is said to have more 'science' than his opponent. In all these cases 'science' is applied to something that is not a science but an art. According to Webster, *science* is 'knowledge classified and made available,' and *art* is 'the application of knowledge or power to practical purposes.' In a word, *science* is knowing, *art* is doing. Education is an art, and it is no more belittled by being called an art than sculpture or painting is. It is to the credit of an art to be largely *based* on science, as education is upon psychology, and modern agriculture upon botany and several others, but confounding the one thing with the other should be avoided."—Our Language.

**Score.** No painstaking writer ever uses *score* as it is used in the following sentences: "Miss Sadie Martinot *scores* a success in the Passport." "Col. Savage, who

wrote My Official Wife, the dramatization of which *scored* an immediate failure," etc.—Evening Sun.

"In carrying out this policy they have *scored* [achieved] several marked successes."—N. Y. Tribune.

"Mme. Melba *scored a hit* [was very successful] at the Worcester musical festival."—Evening Sun.

The man that writes in this way must have a very meager vocabulary.

**Section.** The use of this word for region, neighborhood, vicinity, part (of the town or country), is said to be a Westernism. A *section* is a division of the public lands containing six hundred and forty acres.

**Seem—Appear.** Graham, in his English Synonymes, says of these two words: "What *seems* is in the mind ; what *appears* is external. Things *appear* as they present themselves to the eye ; they *seem* as they are represented to the mind. Things *appear* good or bad as far as we can judge by our senses. Things *seem* right or wrong as we determine by reflection. Perception and sensation have to do with *appearing* ; reflection and comparison, with *seeming*. When things are not what they *appear*, our senses are deceived ; when things are not what they *seem*, our judgment is at fault."

"No man had ever a greater power over himself, or was less the man he *seemed* to be, which shortly after *appeared* to everybody, when he cared less to keep on the mask."—Clarendon.

**Seldom.** The using of this adverb as an adjective is archaic.

"The *seldom* [rare or infrequent] use of it."—Trench.

"My Lord Duke's entertainments were both *seldom* [rare or infrequent] and shabby."—Thackeray.

**Seldom or ever.** This phrase should be "*seldom if ever*," or "*seldom or never*."

"I have *seldom if ever* seen him" is the equivalent of "I have *seldom* seen him, if I have *ever* seen him," while "I have *seldom or never* seen him" is the equivalent of "I have *seldom* seen him, or possibly I have *never* seen him." Each of these phrases has its meaning; not so, however, the phrases *seldom or ever* and *rarely or ever*: they are meaningless.

*Rarely or ever* is equally objectionable, the correct locution being *rarely if ever*, or *rarely or never*.

**Seraphim.** This is the plural of *seraph*. "One of the *seraphim*." "To Thee, cherubim and seraphim continually do cry." See CHERUBIM.

**Set—Sit.** *Set* is often incorrectly used for *sit*. To *set*; imperfect tense, *set*; participles, *setting*, *set*. To *sit*; imperfect tense, *sat*; participles, *sitting*, *sat*. To *set*, means, to put, to place, to plant; to put in any place, condition, state, or posture. We say, to *set* about, to *set* against, to *set* out, to *set* going, to *set* apart, to *set* aside, to *set* down (to put in writing). To *sit*, means, to rest on the lower part of the body, to repose on a seat, to perch, as a bird, etc. We say, "*Sit* up"—i. e., rise from lying to sitting; "We will *sit* up"—i. e., will not go to bed; "*Sit* down"—i. e., place yourself on a seat. We *sit* a horse and we *sit* for a portrait. Garments *sit* well or otherwise. Congress *sits*, so does a court. "I have *sat* up long enough." "I have *set* it on the table." We *set* down figures, but we *sit* down on the ground. We *set* a hen, and a hen *sits* on eggs. We should say, therefore, "As cross as a *sitting* [not, as a *setting*] hen."

**Setback.** "They are, however, met at the *outset* with some discouraging *setbacks*."—N. Y. Times.

Since we place the adverb first in all such compound words as *outset*, *inset*, *upset*, *outcast*, *outcome*,

and the like, why should we not do likewise with *back-set*?

**Settle.** This word is often inelegantly, if not incorrectly, used for *pay*. We *pay* our way, *pay* our fare, *pay* our hotel bills, and the like. See also LOCATE.

**Shall and Will.** The nice distinctions that should be made between these two auxiliaries are, in some parts of the English-speaking world, often disregarded, and that, too, by persons of high culture. The proper use of *shall* and *will* can much better be learned from example than from precept. Many persons that use them, and also *should* and *would*, with well-nigh unerring correctness, do so unconsciously; it is simply habit with them, and they, though their culture may be limited, will receive a sort of verbal shock from Biddy's inquiry, "*Will* I put the kettle on, ma'am?" when your Irish or Scotch countess would not be in the least disturbed by it.

SHALL, in an affirmative sentence, in the first person, and WILL, in the second and third persons, merely announce future action. Thus, "I *shall* go to town to-morrow." "I *shall* not; I *shall* wait for better weather." "We *shall* be glad to see you." "I *shall* soon be twenty." "We *shall* set out early, and *shall* try to arrive by noon." "You *will* be pleased." "You *will* soon be twenty." "You *will* find him honest." "He *will* go with us."

SHALL, in an affirmative sentence, in the second and third persons, announces the speaker's intention to control. Thus, "You *shall* hear me out." "You *shall* go, sick or well." "He *shall* be my heir." "They *shall* go, whether they want to go or not."

WILL, in the first person, expresses a promise, announces the speaker's intention to control, proclaims a determination. Thus, "I *will* [I promise to] assist you." "I *will* [I am

determined to] have my right." "We *will* [we promise to] come to you in the morning."

*SHALL*, in an interrogative sentence, in the first and third persons, consults the will or judgment of another; in the second person, it inquires concerning the intention or future action of another. Thus, "Shall I go with you?" "When shall we see you again?" "When shall I receive it?" "When shall I get well?" "When shall we get there?" "Shall he come with us?" "Shall you demand indemnity?" "Shall you go to town to-morrow?" "What shall you do about it?"

*WILL*, in an interrogative sentence, in the second person, asks concerning the wish, and, in the third person, concerning the purpose or future action of others. Thus, "Will you have an apple?" "Will you go with me to my uncle's?" "Will he be of the party?" "Will they be willing to receive us?" "When will he be here?"

*Will* can not be used interrogatively in the first person singular or plural. We can not say, "Will I go?" "Will I help you?" "Will I be late?" "Will we get there in time?" "Will we see you again soon?"

Official courtesy, in order to avoid the semblance of compulsion, conveys its commands in the *you-will* form instead of the strictly grammatical *you-shall* form. It says, for example, "You *will* proceed to Key West, where you will find further instructions awaiting you."

A clever writer on the use of *shall* and *will* says that whatever concerns one's beliefs, hopes, fears, likes, or dislikes, can not be expressed in conjunction with *I will*. Are there no exceptions to this rule? If I say, "I think I *shall* go to Philadelphia to-morrow," I convey the impression that my going depends upon circumstances beyond my control; but if I say, "I think I *will* go to Philadelphia to-morrow,"

I convey the impression that my going depends upon circumstances within my control—that my going or not depends on mere inclination. We certainly must say, “I fear that I *shall* lose it”; “I hope that I *shall* be well”; “I believe that I *shall* have the ague”; “I hope that I *shall* not be left alone”; “I fear that we *shall* have bad weather”; “I *shall* dislike the country”; “I *shall* like the performance.” The writer referred to asks, “How can one say, ‘I *will* have the headache’?” I answer, “Very easily, as every young woman knows. Let us see: ‘Mary, you know you promised John to drive out with him to-morrow; how *shall* you get out of it?’ ‘Oh, I *will* have the headache!’” We request that people *will* do thus or so, and not that they *shall*. Thus, “It is requested that no one *will* leave the room.”

*Shall* is rarely, if ever, used for *will*; it is *will* that is used for *shall*. Expressions like the following are common: “Where *will* you be next week?” “I *will* be at home.” “We *will* have dinner at six o’clock.” “How *will* you go about it?” “When *will* you begin?” “When *will* you set out?” “What *will* you do with it?” In all such expressions, when it is a question of mere future action on the part of the person speaking or spoken to, the auxiliary must be *shall*, and not *will*.

*Should* and *would* follow the regimen of *shall* and *will*. *Would* is often used for *should*; *should* rarely for *would*. Correct speakers say, “I *should* go to town to-morrow if I had a horse.” “I *should* not; I *should* wait for better weather.” “We *should* be glad to see you.” “We *should* have started earlier if the weather had been clear.” “I *should* like to go to town, and *would* go if I could.” “I *would* assist you if I could.” “I *should* have been ill if I had gone.” “I *would* I were home again!” “I *should*

go fishing to-day if I were home." "I *should* so like to go to Europe!" "I *should* prefer to see it first." "I *should* be delighted." "I *should* be glad to have you sup with me." "I knew that I *should* be ill." "I feared that I *should* lose it." "I hoped that I *should* see him." "I thought I *should* have the ague." "I hoped that I *should* not be left alone." "I was afraid that we *should* have bad weather." "I knew I *should* dislike the country." "I *should* not like to do it, and *will* not [determination] unless compelled to."

In indirect discourse, *will* is much misused for *shall*; *would* much misused for *should*. Indeed, it is safe to say that in indirect discourse the auxiliaries are commonly misused. See WILL—WOULD.

**Shimmy.** "We derive from the French language our word *chemise*—pronounced *shemmeeze*. In French, the word denotes a man's shirt, as well as the under garment worn by women. In this country it is often pronounced by people who should know better, *shimmy*. Rather than call it *shimmy*, resume the use of the old English words *shift* and *smock*. Good usage unqualifiedly condemns *gents*, *pants*, *kids*, *gums*, and *shimmy*."—Vulgarisms and Other Errors of Speech.

**Shire.** This word means a territorial division, and is the equivalent of county. We should therefore say, as the English always do, "The county of York or of Berks," and not "of Yorkshire or of Berkshire," which is pleonastic.

**Should.** See OUGHT.

**Sick—Ill.** These words are often used indiscriminately. *Sick*, however, is the stronger word, and ordinarily the better word to use. *Ill* is used in England more than with us: there, *sick* is commonly limited to the expressing of nausea; as, "sick at the stomach,"

**Signature, over or under?** A man writes *under*, not *over*, a signature. Charles Dickens wrote *under* the signature of "Boz"; Mr. Samuel L. Clemens writes *under* the signature of "Mark Twain."

The reason given in Webster's Dictionary for preferring the use of *under* is absurd—viz., that the paper is *under* the hand in writing. The expression is elliptical, and has no reference to the position either of the signature or of the paper. "Given under my hand and seal" means "under the guarantee of my signature and my seal." "Under his own signature" or "name" means "under his own character, without disguise." "Under the signature of Boz" means "under the disguise of the assumed name Boz." We always write *under* a certain date, though the date be placed, as it often is, at the bottom of the page.

**Signs.** In one of the principal business streets of New York there is a sign that reads, "German Lace Store." Now, whether this is a store that makes a specialty of German laces, or whether it is a store where all kinds of lace are sold, kept by a German or after the German fashion, is something that the sign doubtless means to tell us, but, owing to the absence of a hyphen ("German-Lace Store," or "German Lace-Store"), does not tell us. Nothing is more common than erroneous punctuation in signs, and gross mistakes by the unlettered in the wording of the simplest printed matter.

The bad taste, incorrect punctuation, false grammar, and ridiculous nonsense met with on signs and placards, and in advertisements, are really surprising. An advertisement tells us that "A pillow that assists in procuring sleep is a *benediction*"; a placard, that they have "Charlotte *de Russe*" for sale within, which means, if it means anything, that they have for sale somebody or something called Char-



lotte of Russian ; and, then, on how many signs do we see the possessive case when the plural number is intended !

**Simile.** In rhetoric, a direct and formal comparison is called a *simile*. It is ordinarily denoted by *like*, *as*, or *so* ; *as*,

“ I have ventured,

*Like* little wanton boys that swim on bladders,

These many summers in a sea of glory.”

“ Thy smile is *as* the dawn of vernal day.”—Shakespeare.

“ *As*, down in the sunless retreats of the ocean,

Sweet flow’rets are springing no mortal can see ;

*So*, deep in my bosom, the prayer of devotion,

Unheard by the world, rises silent to thee.”—Moore.

“ ’Tis with our judgments *as* with our watches : none

Go just alike, yet each believes his own.”—Pope.

“ Grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,

*As* richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.”—Cowper.

“ *As* no roads are so rough as those that have just been mended, *so* no sinners are so intolerant as those who [that] have just turned saints.”—Lacon.

**Simply.** Inelegant usage frequently makes this word do duty nowadays for *really*, *absolutely*, etc.

“ The amount of noise made over Mr. Matthew Arnold and his opinions upon America are so utterly disproportionate to the importance of the gentleman, that they become *simply* ridiculous, and, to a certain extent, nauseating.”

“ The vegetation of the island is *simply* magnificent, everything appearing to grow spontaneously.”

“ His elocution is *simply* delightful, as a fine accomplishment.”

**Sin.** See CRIME.

**Since—Ago.** Dr. Johnson says of these two adverbs :

"Reckoning time toward the present, we use *since*; as, 'It is a year *since* it happened.' Reckoning from the present, we use *ago*; as, 'It is a year *ago*.' This is not, perhaps, always observed."

Dr. Johnson's rule will hardly suffice as a sure guide. *Since* is often used for *ago*, but *ago* never for *since*. *Ago* is derived from the participle *agone*, while *since* comes from a preposition. We say properly, "not long" or "some time *ago* [*agone*]."

In the following sentences *since* should in every instance be *ago*:

"Traveling in Italy Forty Years *Since*."

"At a wedding not long *since* among the presents displayed was a \$10,000 bank note from the father of the bride."

"I left my wife here when I sailed for England, six months *since*," remarked Mr. Burton.

"We noticed, some weeks *since*, the fashion of trimming ladies' hats with the heads of kittens."

*Since* requires an object, a clause after it, thus: "Since *then*"; "since *that time*"; "since *I saw you*"; "since *I heard from him last*"; "there has been nothing done about it since *you were here*."

"Theo and Judic are both widows now. About a month ago M. Judic 'went over to the majority' [very offensive slang], and a couple [a few] of days since [*ago*] M. Theo followed," etc.—Evening Telegram.

**Since when.** Often heard when the proper locution is, "Since *that time*," or "Since *what time*?" according to the meaning.

**Sing.** Of the two forms—*sang* and *sung*—for the imperfect tense of the verb *to sing*, the former—*sang*—is to be preferred.

**Single.** This word is frequently used superfluously.

"He [Li Hung Chang] is known to have amassed a colossal fortune, reputed by many to be the largest possessed by any *single* individual in the world."—London Times. The word *individual* unaided conveys the idea of oneness.

**Slander.** See ASPERSE.

**Slang.** The slang that is heard among respectable people is made of genuine words, to which an arbitrary meaning is given. It is always low, commonly coarse, and not unfrequently foolish. With the exception of *cant*, there is nothing that is more to be shunned. We sometimes meet with persons of considerable culture that interlard their talk with slang expressions, but it is safe to assert that they are always persons of coarse natures.

**Smart.** See CLEVER.

**Smash.** Here is a use of the verb *to smash* that will be relished by lovers of slang: "It is likely that those figures will be *smashed* at the Cambridge-Yale meeting."—N. Y. Evening Sun.

**Smell of.** See TASTE OF.

**So.** See AS; SUCH; THAT.

**Sobriquet.** Very often misspelled; thus, *soubriquet*, which is wholly unauthorized.

**Solecism.** In rhetoric, a solecism is defined as an offense against the rules of grammar by the use of words in a wrong construction; false syntax.

"Modern grammarians designate by *solecism* any word or expression which [that] does not agree with the established usage of writing or speaking. But, as customs change, what at one time is considered a *solecism* may at another time be regarded as correct. A *solecism*, therefore, differs from a *barbarism*, inasmuch as the latter consists in the

use of a word or expression which [that] is altogether contrary to the spirit of the language, and can, properly speaking, never become established as correct."—Penny Cyclopædia. See also BARBARISM.

**So much so.** "The shipments by the coast steamers are very large, *so much so* [large?] as to tax the capacity of the different lines." The sentence should be, "The shipments by the coast steamers are very large, *so large* as to tax," etc.

"He was very much excited and exceedingly drunk, *so much so* [drunk] that he had got a lady to bring him home."

"The summer is very rainy, and the rest of the year is very dry, *so much so* [dry] that the grass turns into dust."

"Her individuality, indeed, is very striking; *so much so* [striking] that her friends," etc.

"He was sick, but not *so much so* [sick] as he thought." This is certainly a locution to be avoided.

**Some.** Often misused for *somewhat*; thus, "She is *some* better"; "He is *some* wiser for his experience"; "I am *some* stronger than I was." In these examples *some*, it will be seen, is used as an adverb, which it properly never is. "To English ears," says Proctor, "an American use of the word *some* sounds strange—viz., as an adverb. An American will say, "I think *some* of buying a house," or the like, for "I have some idea of buying," etc.

**Something.** This word and *anything* are not interchangeable, though many writers seem to think they are. *Something* is restrictive, is particular, exclusive, while *anything* is general, unlimited.

"*Something* (not everything) which [that] is owed or rightfully required is said to be due."—Standard Dictionary.

Not so. *Anything* (no matter what) owed or rightfully required is said to be due.

"A circumstance is *something* [anything] existing or occurring incidentally to some other fact or event."—Standard Dictionary.

**Specialty.** This form has within a recent period been generally substituted for *speciality*. There is no apparent reason, however, why the *i* should be dropped, since it is required by the etymology of the word, and is retained in nearly all other words of the same formation.

**Specious Fallacy.** A *fallacy* is a sophism, a logical artifice, a deceitful or false appearance; while *specious* means having the appearance of truth, plausible. Hence we see that the very essence of a *fallacy* is its *speciousness*. We may very properly say that a *fallacy* is more or less *specious*, but we can not properly say that a fallacy *is* specious, since without speciousness we can have no fallacies.

**Splendid.** This poor word is used by the gentler sex to qualify well-nigh everything that has their approval, from a sugarplum to the national capitol. In fact, *splendid* and *awful* seem to be about the only adjectives some of our superlative young women have in their vocabularies.

**Standpoint.** This is a word to which many students of English seriously object, and among them are the editors of some of our daily papers, who do not allow it to appear in their columns. The phrase to which no one objects is, *point of view*.

"No doubt an improvement on *point of view*, as being a closer and therefore a more convenient expression."—Graham.

"Standpoint, besides being convenient as a single word,

conveys a suggestion not carried by *point of view*."—Standard Dictionary.

**State.** This word means: To express the particulars of, in writing or in words; to set down or set forth in detail, or in gross; to place in mental view, or represent all the circumstances of modification; to make known specifically; to explain particularly; yet it is often used when the meaning intended is simply that of *say*. When *say* says all one wishes to say, why use a more pretentious word?

"The late Chunder Sen *stated on various occasions* [often said] that he *had* [omit] learned to write and speak our language with such terse felicity because of an almost exclusive study of the writers of Queen Anne's time." A very bad sentence altogether. Learn because of a study of!! It is from The Independent.

"We have already *stated* our objections to the Republican ticket, but these objections do not make us Democrats." Here is a correct use of the word.

"It is *stated* [said] that William Thaw, of Pittsburg, is worth \$25,000,000."

"The five Aronson directors and the four McCaull ones [directors] parted apparently on pleasant [friendly] terms, and the meeting *was stated* [is said] by Mr. Aronson to have been harmonious."

**Stent.** Though very often heard in conversation, this word is barely recognized by the dictionaries. The proper word to use is *stint*.

**Stop.** "Where are you *stopping*?" "At the Metropolitan." The proper word to use here is *staying*. *To stop* means to cease to go forward, to leave off; and *to stay* means to abide, to tarry, to dwell, to sojourn. We *stay*, not *stop*, at home, at a hotel, or with a friend, as the case may be.

**Storm.** Many persons indulge in a careless use of this word, using it when they mean to say simply that it rains or snows. To a *storm* a violent commotion of the atmosphere is indispensable. A very high wind constitutes a storm, though it be dry.

**Straightway.** Here is a good Anglo-Saxon word of *two* syllables whose place, without any good reason, is being usurped by the Latin word *immediately*, of *five* syllables.

**Street.** We live *in*, not *on*—meet our acquaintances *in*, not *on*—things occur *in*, not *on*—houses are built *in*, not *on*, the street, and so forth.

**Stricken.** The form now preferred for the past participle of *strike* is *struck*, in such sentences as “The objectionable words were ordered to be *struck* [not stricken] out.” When misfortune is implied, the older form, *stricken*, is still used: “He was *stricken* with a fever.”

**Style.** This is a term that is used to characterize the peculiarities that distinguish a writer or a composition. Correctness and clearness properly belong to the domain of *diction*; simplicity, conciseness, gravity, elegance, diffuseness, floridity, force, feebleness, coarseness, etc., belong to the domain of *style*.

**Subjunctive Mood.** This mood is unpopular with not a few nowadays grammarians. One says that it is rapidly falling into disuse; that, in fact, there is good reason to suppose it will soon become obsolete. Another says that it would perhaps be better to abolish it entirely, as its use is a continual source of dispute among grammarians and of perplexity to schools. Another says that it is a universal stumbling-block; that nobody seems to understand it, although almost everybody attempts to use it.

That the subjunctive mood is much less used now than

it was a hundred years ago is certain, but that it is obsolescent is very far from certain. It would not be easy, I think, to find a single contemporary writer that does not use it. That it is not always easy to determine what form of it we should employ, is very true ; but if we are justified in abolishing it altogether, as Mr. Chandler suggests, because its correct use is not always easy, then we are also justified in abolishing the use of *shall* and *will*, and of the prepositions, for surely their right use is likewise at times most puzzling. Meanwhile, most persons will think it well to learn to use the subjunctive mood properly. With that object in view, one can not perhaps do better than to attend to what Dr. Alexander Bain, Professor of Logic in the University of Aberdeen, says upon the subject. In Professor Bain's Higher English Grammar we find :

"In subordinate clauses.—In a clause expressing a condition, and introduced by a conjunction of condition, the verb is sometimes, but not always, in the subjunctive mood : 'If I *be* able,' 'If I *were* strong enough,' 'If thou *should* come.'

"The subjunctive inflections have been wholly lost. The sense that something is wanting appears to have led many writers to use indicative forms where the subjunctive might be expected. The tendency appears strongest in the case of 'wert,' which is now used as indicative (for 'wast') only in poetical or elevated language.

"The following is the rule given for the use of the subjunctive mood :

"When in a conditional clause it is intended to express doubt or denial, use the subjunctive mood.\* 'If I *were* sure of what you tell me, I should go.'

"When the conditional clause is *affirmative* and *certain*,

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\* "Dr. Angus on The English Tongue, art. 527."



the verb is *indicative* : 'If that *is* the case' (as you now tell me, and as I believe), 'I can understand you.' This is equivalent to a clause of assumption, or supposition : 'That being the case,' 'Inasmuch as that is the case,' etc.

"As *futurity* is by its nature uncertain, the subjunctive is extensively used for future conditionality : 'If it *rain*, we shall not be able to go' ; 'If I *be* well' ; 'If he *come* shortly' ; 'If thou *return* at all in peace' ; 'Though he *slay* me, yet will I trust in him.' These events are all in the uncertain future, and are put in the subjunctive.\*

"A future result or consequence is expressed by the subjunctive in such instances as these : 'I will wait till he *return*' ; 'No fear lest dinner *cool*' ; 'Thou shalt stone him with stones, that he *die*' ; 'Take heed lest at any time your hearts *be* overcharged with surfeiting.'

"Uncertainty as to a past event may arise from our own ignorance, in which case the subjunctive is properly employed, and serves the useful purpose of distinguishing our ignorance from our knowledge. 'If any of my readers

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\* "In the following passages the indicative mood would be more suitable than the subjunctive : 'If thou *be* the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread' ; 'If thou *be* the Son of God, come down from the cross' ; for, although the address was not sincere on the part of the speakers, they really meant to make the supposition or to grant that he was the Son of God ; 'seeing that thou *art* the Son of God.' Likewise in the following : 'Now if Christ *be* preached, that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead?' The meaning is, 'Seeing now that Christ *is* preached.' In the continuation, the conditional clauses are of a different character, and 'be' is appropriate : 'But if there *be* no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen ; and if Christ *be* not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.' Again, 'If thou *bring* thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest,' etc. Consistency and correctness require 'remember.' " — Harrison on The English Language, p. 287.

*has* looked with so little attention upon the world around him'; this would mean—'as I know that they have.' The meaning intended is probably—'as I do not know whether they have or not,' and therefore the subjunctive 'have' is preferable. 'If ignorance *is* bliss,' which I (ironically) admit. Had Pope been speaking seriously, he would have said, 'If ignorance *be* bliss,' he himself dissenting from the proposition.

"A wish contrary to the fact takes the subjunctive: 'I wish he *were* here' (which he is not).

"An intention not yet carried out is also subjunctive: 'The sentence is that you *be* imprisoned.'

"The only correct form of the future subjunctive is, 'If I should.' We may say, 'I do not know whether or not I *shall* come'; but 'If I shall come,' expressing a condition, is not an English construction. 'If he will' has a real meaning, as being the present subjunctive of the verb 'will': 'If he *be* willing,' 'If he *have* the will." It is in accordance with good usage to express a future subjunctive meaning by a present tense; but in that case the form must be strictly subjunctive, and not indicative. 'If any member *absents* himself, he shall forfeit a penny for the use of the club'; this ought to be either 'absent,' or 'should absent.' 'If thou *neglectest* or *doest* unwillingly what I command thee, I will rack thee with old cramps'; better, 'If thou *neglect* or *do* unwillingly,' or 'If thou should neglect.' The indicative would be justified by the speaker's belief that the supposition is sure to turn out to be the fact.

"The past subjunctive may imply denial; as, 'If the book *were* in the library (as it is not), it should be at your service.'

"'If the book *be* in the library,' means, 'I do not know whether it be or not.' We have thus the power of dis-

criminating *three* different suppositions. 'If the book *is* in the library' (as I know it is); 'If it *be*' (I am uncertain); 'If it *were*' (as I know it is not). So, 'If it rains,' 'If it rain,' 'If it rained.' 'Nay, and the villains march wide between the legs, as if they *had* gyves on,' implying that they had not.

"The same power of the past tense is exemplified in 'If I *could*, I *would*,' which means, 'I can not'; whereas, 'If I can, I *will*,' means, 'I do not know.'

"The past subjunctive may be expressed by an inversion: '*Had* I the power,' '*Were* I as I have been.'

"In Principal Clauses.—The principal clause in a conditional statement also takes the subjunctive form when it refers to what is future and contingent, and when it refers to what is past and uncertain, or denied. 'If he should try, he *would* succeed'; 'If I had seen him, I *should* have asked him.'

"The usual forms of the subjunctive in the principal clause are 'would,' 'should,' 'would have,' 'should have'; and it is to be noted that in this application the second persons take the inflectional ending of the indicative: 'shouldst,' 'wouldst.'

"'If 'twere done when 'tis done, then 'twere [would be] well  
It *were* [should be] done quickly.'

"The English idiom appears sometimes to permit the use of an indicative where we should expect a subjunctive form. 'Many acts, that *had* been otherwise blamable, were employed'; 'I *had* fainted, unless I had believed,' etc.

"'Which else *lie* furred and shrouded in the soul.'

"In 'else' there is implied a conditional clause that would suit 'lie'; or the present may be regarded as a more vivid form of expression. *Had* may be indicative; just as we sometimes find pluperfect indicative for pluper-

fect subjunctive in the same circumstances in Latin. We may refer it to the general tendency, as already seen in the uses of *could*, *would*, *should*, etc., to express conditionality by [with] a past tense; or the indicative may be used as a more direct and vivid mode. *Had* may be subjunctive; 'I *had* fainted' is, in construction, analogous to 'I *should* have fainted'; the word for futurity, *shall*, not being necessary to the sense, is withdrawn, and its past inflection transferred to *have*. Compare German *würde haben* and *hätte*."

In addition to the foregoing, we find in Prof. Bain's Composition Grammar the following:

"The case most suited to the subjunctive is *contingent futurity*, or the expression of an event unknown absolutely, as being still in the future: 'If to-morrow *be* fine, I will walk with you.'

"'Unless I *were* prepared,' insinuates pretty strongly that I am or am not prepared, according to the manner of the principal clause.

"'What's a tall man unless he *fight*?'"

"'The sword hath ended him: so shall it thee,  
Unless thou *yield* thee as my prisoner.'

"'Who but must laugh, if such a man there *be*?'"

Who would not weep, if Atticus *were* he?'

"'I am to second Ion if he *fail*'; the failing is left quite doubtful. 'I should very imperfectly execute the task which [that] I have undertaken if I *were* merely to treat of battles and sieges.' Macaulay thus implies that the scope of his work is to be wider than mere battles and sieges.

"'The subjunctive appears in some other constructions. 'I hope to see the exhibition before *it close*'; 'Wait till the *return*'; 'Thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he *come*'; 'Take heed lest passion *sway* thy judgment'; 'Speak

to me, though it *be* in wrath'; 'If he *smite* him with an instrument of iron so that he *die*, he is a murderer'; 'Beware this night that thou *cross* not my footsteps' (Shelley).

"Again: 'Whatever this *be*'; 'whoever he *be*'; 'how-e'er it *be*' (Tennyson); and such like.

" 'And *as long*, O God, *as she*  
*Have* a grain of love for me,  
 So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
 Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
 However weary, a spark of will  
 Not to be trampled out.'

"The future subjunctive is given in our scheme of the verb as 'should' in all persons: 'If I should, if thou should, if he should.' In old English we have 'thou *shouldst*': 'If thou, Lord, *shouldst* mark iniquities.'

"An inverted conditional form has taken deep root in our language, and may be regarded as an elegant and forcible variety. While dispensing with the conjunction, it does not cause ambiguity; nevertheless, conditionality is well marked.

" 'If you *should* abandon your Penelope and your home for Calypso, —': 'Should you abandon —.'

" 'Go not my horse the better,  
 I must become a borrower of the night  
 For a dark hour or twain.'

" 'Here had we now our country's honor roof'd  
*Were* the graced person of our Banquo present.

" 'Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,  
*Bring* with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
*Be* thy intents wicked or charitable,  
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape  
 That I will speak to thee.'

“ ‘Come one, *come* all, this rock shall fly  
From its firm base as soon as I.’—Scott.

“The following examples are given by Mätzner:

“ ‘Varney’s communications, *be* they what they might, were operating in his favor.’—Scott.

“ ‘Governing persons, *were* they never so insignificant intrinsically, have for most part plenty of memoir-writers.’—Carlyle.

“ ‘Even *were* I disposed, I could not gratify the reader.’—Warren.

“ ‘Bring them back to me, *cost* what it may.’—Coleridge, Wallenstein.

“ ‘And *will* you, *will* you, I will marry you.’—Taming of the Shrew.

“ *Were* is used in the principal clause for *should be* or *would be*. \*

“ ‘I *were* [= *should be*] a fool, not less than if a panther  
Were panic-stricken by the antelope’s eye,  
If she escape me.’—Shelley.

“ ‘Were you but riding forth to air yourself,  
Such parting *were* too petty.’

“ ‘He *were* [= *would be*] no lion, were not Romanshinds.’

“ ‘Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night, . . .

It *were* not well; indeed it *were* not well.’—Shelley.

“ *Had* is sometimes used in the principal clause for ‘should have’ or ‘would have.’ †

\* “So, in German, *wäre* for *würde sein*. ‘Hätt’ ich Schwingen, hätt’ ich Flügel, nach den Hügeln zög’ ich hin,’ for ‘würde ich ziehen.’”

† “So, in German, *hätte* occurs for *würde haben*. ‘Wäre er da gewesen, so hätten wir ihn gesehen,’ for ‘so würden wir ihn gesehen haben.’ *Hätten* is still conditional, not indicative. In Latin, the pluperfect *indicative* is occasionally used, which is explained as a more vivid form.”

“ ‘Had I known this before we set out, I think I *had* [= would have] remained at home.’—Scott.

“ ‘Hadst thou been kill’d when first thou didst presume,  
Thou *hadst* not lived to kill a son of mine.’

“ ‘If he

Had killed me, he *had* done a kinder deed.’

“ ‘For once he *had* been ta’en or slain,  
An it had not been his ministry.’—Scott.

“ ‘If thou hadst said him nay, it *had* been sin.’ \*

“ ‘*Had* better, rather, best, as lief, as well, etc.,’ is a form that is explained under this heading. *Had* stands for *would have*. The exploded notion that *had* is a corrupted *would* must be guarded against.

“ ‘I *had* as lief not be.’ That is, ‘I *would* as lief *have* not [*to*] be’ = ‘I would as willingly [or as soon] have non-existence.’

“ ‘*Had* you rather Cæsar were living——’? ‘*Would* you rather *have* [*would* you *prefer* that] Cæsar were living?’

“ ‘He *had* better reconsider the matter’ is, ‘He *would* better *have* [*to*] reconsider the matter.’

“ ‘I *had* rather be a kitten and cry mew

Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers ;

I *had* rather hear a brazen canstick turned.’

“ Let us compare this form with another that appears side by side with it in early writers. (Cp. Lat. ‘*habeo*’ and ‘*mihi est*.’)

“ The construction of ‘*had*’ is thus illustrated in Chaucer, as in (Nonne Prestes Tale, 300) :

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\* “ In *principal* clauses the inflection of the second person is always retained: ‘thou *hadst*,’ ‘thou *wouldst*, *shouldst*,’ etc. In the example, the subordinate clause, although subjunctive, shows ‘*hadst*.’ And this usage is exceedingly common.”

“ ‘By God, I *hadde* levere than my scherte,  
That ye *hadde* rad his legend, as I have.’

“ Compare now :

“ ‘Ah *me were* levere with lawe loose my lyf  
Then so to fote hem *falle*.’—Wright, Polit. S.

“ Here *were* is unquestionably for *would be* ; and the whole expression might be given by *had*, thus : ‘Ah, I *hadde* levere —,’ ‘[to] loose’ and ‘[to] *falle*,’ changing from subjects of *were* to objects of *hadde*.

“ So, in the Chaucer example above, if we substitute *be* for *have*, we shall get the same meaning, thus : ‘By God, *me were* levere —.’ The interchange helps us to see more clearly that *hadde* is to be explained as subjunctive for *would have*.” See INDICATIVE and SUBJUNCTIVE.

**Such.** “ I have never before seen *such* a large ox.” By a little transposing of the words of this sentence, we have, “ I have never before seen an ox *such* large,” which makes it quite clear that we should say *so large an ox*, and not *such a large ox*.

As proof that this error in the use of *such* is common, we find in Mr. George Washington Moon’s Dean’s English and Bad English, the sentence, “ With all due deference to *such* a high authority on *such* a very important matter.” With a little transposing, this sentence is made to read, “ With all due deference to an authority *such* high on a matter *such* very important.” It is clear that the sentence should read, “ With all due deference to *so* high an authority on *so* very important a matter.”

The phrases, *such* a handsome, *such* a lovely, *such* a long, *such* narrow, etc., are incorrect, and should be *so* handsome, *so* lovely, *so* long, and so on.

“ He is *such* an extravagant young man that he soon spent all his patrimony ” ; say, *so* extravagant a young man.



**Such another.** Properly, another such.

**Summon.** This verb comes in for its full share of mauling. We often hear such expressions as "I will *summons* him," instead of *summon* him; and "He was *summonsed*," instead of *summoned*.

**Superfluous relatives.** Sentences are often met with in which there is a superfluous relative pronoun.

"There are Latin words in *us* which [that] we treat in English as nouns singular, yet *which* in Latin," etc. The second relative only serves to make the diction clumsy. Had the writer used *that* for his first relative, it is probable that he would not have thought a second pronoun necessary.

**Superfluous words.** "Whenever I try to write well, I *always* find I can do it." "I shall have finished by the *latter* end of the week." "Iron sinks *down* in water." "He combined *together* all the facts." "My brother called on me, and we *both* took a walk." "I can do it *equally* as well as he." "We could not forbear *from* doing it." "Before I go, I must *first* be paid." "We were compelled to return *back*." "We forced them to retreat *back* fully a mile." "His conduct was approved *of* by everybody." "They conversed *together* for a long time." "The balloon rose *up* very rapidly." "Give me another *one*." "Come home as soon as *ever* you can." "Who finds him *in* money?" "He came in last *of all*." "He has *got* all he can carry." "What have you *got*?" "No matter what I have *got*." "I have *got* the headache." "Have you *got* any brothers?" "No, but I have *got* a sister." All the words in *italics* are superfluous.

**Superior.** See INFERIOR.

**Superior.** This word is not infrequently used for able, excellent, gifted; as, "She is a *superior* woman,"

meaning an *excellent* woman ; "He is a *superior* man," meaning an *able* man. The expression "*an inferior man*" is not less objectionable,

**Supposititious.** This word is *properly* used in the sense of put by a trick into the place or character belonging to another ; spurious ; counterfeit ; not genuine ; and *improperly* in the sense of conjectural ; hypothetical ; imaginary ; presumptive ; as, "This is a *supposititious* case," meaning an *imaginary* or *presumptive* case. "The English critic derived his material from a stray copy of some *supposititious* indexes devised by one of the Post reporters."—Nation. Here is a correct use of the word.

**Sure.** Can not properly be used as an adverb. Not, "He will be here *sure*, but, "He will surely be here."

**Sustain.** We occasionally see the word used in the sense of *receive* by persons who find it difficult to be direct and simple. For example, we do not *sustain*—we *receive*—injuries.

It is also sometimes misused in the sense of *to meet with* ; thus, "He had lately *sustained* several small losses, which greatly worried him."

**Swosh.** There is a kind of ill-balanced brain in which the reflective and the imaginative very much outweigh the perceptive. Men to whom this kind of an organization has been given commonly have active minds, but their minds never present anything clearly. To their mental vision all is ill-defined, chaotic. They see everything in a haze. Whether such men talk or write, they are verbose, illogical, intangible, Will-o'-the-wispish. Their thoughts are phantomlike ; like shadows, they continually escape their grasp. In their talk they will, after long dissertations, tell you that they have not said just what they would like to say ; there is always a subtle, lurking something still unexpressed,

which something—the real essence of the matter—your penetration is expected to divine. In their writings they are eccentric, vague, labyrinthine, pretentious, transcendental,\* and frequently ungrammatical. These men, if write they must, should confine themselves to the descriptive; for when they enter the essayist's domain—which they are very prone to do—they write what I will venture to call *swosh*.

We find examples in plenty of this kind of writing in the essays of Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson. Indeed, the impartial critic that will take the trouble to examine any of Mr. Emerson's essays at all carefully, is quite sure to come to the conclusion that Mr. Emerson has seen everything he has ever made the subject of his essays very much as London is seen in a fog from the top of St. Paul's.

Mr. Emerson's definition of Nature runs thus: "Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which philosophy distinguishes from the *Not Me*—that is, both Nature and Art, and all other men, and my own body—must be ranked under this name 'NATURE.' In enumerating the values of Nature and casting up their sum, I shall use the word in both senses—in its common and in its philosophical import. In inquiries so general as our present one, the inaccuracy is not material; no confusion of thought will occur. *Nature*, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man: space,

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\* To those that are not quite clear as to what transcendentalism is, the following lucid definition will be welcome: "It is the spiritual cognoscence of psychological irrefragability connected with concurrent ademption of incolumnient spirituality and etherealized contention of subsultory concretion." Translated by a New York lawyer, it stands thus: "Transcendentalism is two holes in a sandbank: a storm washes away the sand-bank without disturbing the holes."

the air, the river, the leaf. *Art* is applied to the mixture of his will with the same things, as in a house, a canal, a picture, a statue. But his operations, taken together, are so insignificant—a little chipping, baking, patching, and washing—that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind they do not vary the result."

In *Letters and Social Aims*, Mr. Emerson writes: "Eloquence is the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak. He who would convince the worthy Mr. Dunderhead of any truth which Dunderhead does not see, must be a master of his art. Declamation is common; but such possession of thought as is here required, such practical chemistry as the conversion of a truth written in God's language into a truth in Dunderhead's language, is one of the most beautiful and cogent weapons that is forged in the shop of the Divine Artificer."

The first paragraph of Mr. Emerson's *Essay on Art* reads: "All departments of life at the present day—Trade, Politics, Letters, Science, or Religion—seem to feel, and to labor to express, the identity of their law. They are rays of one sun; they translate each into a new language the sense of the other. They are sublime when seen as emanations of a Necessity contradistinguished from the vulgar Fate by being instant and alive, and dissolving man, as well as his works, in its flowing beneficence. This influence is conspicuously visible in the principles and history of Art."

Another paragraph from Mr. Emerson's *Essay on Eloquence*: "The orator, as we have seen, must be a substantial personality. Then, first, he must have power of statement—must have the fact, and know how to tell it. In a knot of men conversing on any subject, the per-

son who knows most about it will have the ear of the company, if he wishes it, and lead the conversation, no matter what genius or distinction other men there present may have ; and, in any public assembly, him who has the facts, and can and will state them, people will listen to, though he is otherwise ignorant, though he is hoarse and ungrateful, though he stutters and screams."

Mr. Emerson, in his Essay on Prudence, writes : "There are all degrees of proficiency in knowledge of the world. It is sufficient to our present purpose to indicate three. One class live to the utility of the symbol, esteeming health and wealth a final good. Another class live above this mark to the beauty of the symbol, as the poet and artist, and the naturalist and man of science. A third class live above the beauty of the symbol to the beauty of the thing signified ; those are wise men. The first class have common sense ; the second, taste ; and the third, spiritual perception. Once in a long time a man traverses the whole scale, and sees and enjoys the symbol solidly ; then, also, has a clear eye for its beauty ; and, lastly, while he pitches his tent on this sacred volcanic isle of nature, does not offer to build houses and barns thereon, reverencing the splendor of God which he sees bursting through each chink and cranny."

Those that are wont to accept others at their self-assessment and to see things through other people's eyes—and there are many such—are in danger of thinking this kind of writing very fine, when in fact it is not only the veriest *swosh*, but that kind of swosh that excites at least an occasional doubt with regard to the writer's sanity. We can make no greater mistake than to suppose that the reason we do not understand these rhetorical contortionists is because they are so subtle and profound. We understand

them quite as well as they understand themselves. At their very best they are but incoherent diluters of other men's ideas. They have but one thing to recommend them—honesty. They believe in themselves.

"Whatever is dark is deep. Stir a puddle, and it is as deep as a well."—Swift.

"It is certain that Emerson can not be understood by minds competent to understand anything that is worthy of being considered by intellectual men."—George Ticknor Curtis, N. Y. Sun, August 31, 1890.

**Synecdoche.** The using of the name of a part for that of the whole, the name of the whole for that of a part, or the using of a definite number for an indefinite, is called, in rhetoric, *synecdoche*. "The bay was covered with *sails*"—i. e., with *ships*. "The man was old, careworn, and gray"—i. e., literally, *his hair*, not the man, was gray. "*Nine tenths* of every man's happiness depends on the reception he meets with in the world." "He had seen seventy *winters*." "Thus spoke the *tempter*": here the part of the character is named that suits the occasion.

"His roof was at the service of the outcast; the unfortunate ever found a welcome at his threshold."

"It is a decree of Providence that man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow."

**Take.** I copy from the London Queen: "The verb *to take* is open to being considered a vulgar verb when used in reference to dinner, tea, or to refreshments of any kind. 'Will you *take*' is not considered *comme il faut*; the verb in favor for the offering of civilities being *to have*." According to The Queen, then, we must say, "Will you *have* some dinner, tea, coffee, wine, fish, beef, salad," etc.

**Talented.** This word has been much assailed. "I regret to see that vile and barbarous vocable *talented* stealing

out of the newspapers into the leading reviews and most respectable publications," said Coleridge. "*Talented* is a mere newspaper and hustings word, invented, I believe, by O'Connell," said Carlyle. "*Talented* is about as bad as possible. What is it? It looks like a participle. From what verb? Fancy such a verb as 'to talent!'" says Dean Alford.

In reply to these gentlemen, Mr. Fitz-Edward Hall, who knows more about the matter than all of them put together, says that, instead of such formations being new, they have been employed for more than three centuries. From Bishop Bale (1553) he cites *mitered*, *caped*, and *tip-peted*; and from Feltham (1628) *parted*—excellently parted = of good parts; while as words in everyday use he gives *booted*, *spurred*, *bearded*, *cultured*, *horned*, etc.

Although *talented* is used by many of those that write best, and although no valid objection can be urged against its use, it would nevertheless be well to use it less than we do, and to make greater use of the words *gifted* and *clever*.

**Taste of.** The redundant *of*, often used in this country in connection with the transitive verbs *to taste*, *to smell*, and *to feel*, is a Yankeeism. We *taste* or *smell* or *feel* a thing, not *taste of* nor *smell of* nor *feel of* a thing. The neuter verbs *to taste* and *to smell* are often followed by *of*. "If butter *tastes of* brass"; "For age but *tastes of* pleasures."

"You shall stifle in your own report,  
And *smell of* calumny."—Shakespeare.

**Tautology.** Among the things to be avoided in writing is *tautology*, which is *the repeating of the same thought*, whether in the same or in different words.

**Tautophony.** "A regard for harmony requires us, in the progress of a sentence, to avoid repeating a sound by

employing the same word more than once, or using in contiguous words similar combinations of letters. This fault is known as *tautology*.”—Dr. G. P. Quackenbos, *Advanced Course of Composition and Rhetoric*, p. 300. Dr. Quackenbos is in error. The repetition of the same *sense* is tautology, and the repetition of the same *sound*, or, as Dr. Quackenbos has it, “the repeating of a sound by employing the same word more than once, or by using in contiguous words similar combinations of letters,” is *tautophony*.

Dr. Quackenbos is equally wrong with regard to the repeating of words. It is often very much better to repeat a word than to employ a synonym. Example:

“It may be possible with freshly drawn blood to distinguish the blood of healthy *persons* from that of diseased *individuals*,” etc. If *individual* were correctly used—which it is not—it would still have been far better to repeat *person*.

**Teach.** To impart knowledge, to inform, to instruct; as, “*Teach* me how to do it”; “*Teach* me to swim”; “He *taught* me to write.” The uncultured often misuse *learn* for *teach*. See LEARN.

**Tense.** The errors made in the use of the tenses are manifold. The one most frequently made by persons of culture—the one that everybody makes, would perhaps be nearer the fact—is that of using the *imperfect* instead of the *perfect* tense; thus, “I never *saw* it played but once”: say *have seen*. “He was the largest man I ever *saw*”: say *have seen*. “I never in my life *had* such trouble”: say *have had*.

Another frequent error, the making of which is not confined to the unschooled, is that of using two verbs in a past tense when only one should be in that time; thus, “I in-



tended to *have gone*": say *to go*. "It was my intention to *have come*": say *to come*. "I expected to *have found* you here": say *to find*. "I was very desirous to *have gone*": say *to go*. "He was better than I expected to *have found* him": say *to find*.

"I meant, when first I came, to *have bought* [buy] all Paris."

"I should have thought it an act of tyranny to *have interfered* [interfere] with his opinions."

"It had been my intention to *have collected* [collect] the remnants of Keats's compositions."—Shelley.

"I intended to *have insisted* [insist] on this sympathy at greater length."—Ruskin.

"I would [should] have liked to *have asked* [ask]," etc.

"We happened to *have been* [be] present on the occasion."

"He would have liked to *have read* [read] it to Isola; it would have been pleasant to *have heard* [hear] his own voice giving due emphasis to the big words."—Mrs. Linton.

Sometimes the error comes of putting the verb that should be in the infinitive in the perfect tense, instead of the verb on which it depends.

"I *should like* [should have liked] very much to *have seen* [see] him."—Sydney Smith.

"There are many of the remaining portions of these aphorisms on which we *should like* [should have liked] to *have dwelt* [dwell]."

"It was my determination to *have taken* [take] possession of the Trent and *sent* [send] her to Key West as a prize."

"They would not have dared to *have done* [do] it if an English man-o'-war had been in sight."

Here is an example of a locution often met with and yet

indefensible : "Several newspapers have been calling attention to this tomfoolery and suggesting that it is time something *was* [be, or should be, or better, perhaps, for something to be] done to put a stop to it."

Among other common errors are the following : "I *seen* him when he *done* it" : say "I *saw* him when he *did* it." "I should have *went* home" : say *gone*. "If he had *went*" : say *gone*. "I wish you had *went*" : say *gone*. "He has *went* out" : say *gone*. "I *come* to town this morning" : say *came*. "He *come* to me for advice" : say *came*. "It *begun* very late" : say *began*. "It had already *began*" : say *began*. "The following toasts were *drank*" : say *drunk*. "His text was that God *was* love" : say *is love*. Another error is made in such sentences as these : "If I had *have* known" : say *had known*. "If he had *have* come as he promised" : say *had come*. "If you had *have* told me" : say *had told*. See IMPERFECT TENSE.

**Testimony.** See EVIDENCE.

**Than.** *Than* and *as* implying comparison have the same case after as before them. "He owes more than *me*" : read, than *I*—i. e., more than *I owe*. "John is not so old as *her*" : read, as *she*—i. e., as *she is*. We should say, then, "He is stronger than *she*" ; "She is older than *he*" ; "You are richer than *I*," etc. But it does not always happen that the nominative case comes after *than* or *as*. "I love you more than *him*," "I give you more than *him*," "I love you as well as *him*" ; that is to say, "I love you more than *I love him*," "I give you more than *I give him*," "I love you as well as *I love him*." Take away *him* and put *he* in all these cases, and the grammar is just as good, but the meaning is quite different. "I love you as well as *him*," means that I love you as well as *I love him* ;

but "I love you as well as *he*," means that I love you as well as *he loves you*.

A common misuse of *than* is that of making it follow *scarcely*, *hardly*, when the proper word to follow them with is *when*; e. g.:

"*Scarcely* had Bentley thus established his fame in this department of letters *than* [when] he as suddenly broke forth in a still higher."

"*Scarcely* had he gone *than* [when] Clodius and several of his gay companions broke in upon him."

"He had *scarcely* done so *than* [when] a French lieutenant endeavored to thrust in below him."

"*Hardly* had misconduct succumbed to treatment *than* [when] it broke out in another."

Here is an example of the use of *than* that is occasionally met with, and that for incorrectness and outer awkwardness can not be surpassed:

"Girls are educated, in China, in a different way *than* boys"; meaning, doubtless, that "In China, boys and girls are educated in a different way." The sentence is from The Open Court.

**Than . . . Help or Avoid.** "I said no more *than I could help* or *avoid*." Here is an error in the use of *help* and of *avoid* that is made by pretty nearly everybody. The thought intended and the thought—owing to the commonness of the error—that is conveyed with this phrase is, "I said no more than what [or than that which, or than that that] I could *not* help or avoid saying," or "I said only what I could not help or avoid saying," whereas the sentence really says, as we see if we look closely, "I said no more than what [or than that which] I could have avoided saying, had I been so inclined." If we supply the elliptical word *what* or the words *than which*, or *that that*

after *than*, we see the error more readily. "I'll give you no more trouble than I can help" means strictly, "I'll give you no more trouble than that trouble that I can or could help or avoid giving you"; yet the meaning intended is, "I'll give you no more trouble than that trouble that I can *not* help or avoid giving you." The exceeding commonness of this error, as we see, makes the sentence "I will give no more than I can help" convey the meaning "I will give no more than [just what] I can *not* help [giving]."

**Than whom.** Cobbett, in his Grammar of the English Language, says: "There is an erroneous way of employing *whom* which [that] I must point out to your particular attention, because it is so often seen in very good writers, and because it is very deceiving. 'The Duke of Argyll, *than whom* no man was more hearty in the cause.' 'Cromwell, *than whom* no man was better skilled in artifice.' A hundred such phrases might be collected from Hume, Blackstone, and even from Drs. Blair and Johnson; yet they are bad grammar. In all such cases, *who* should be made use of, for it is *nominative* and not *objective*. 'No man was more hearty in the cause *than he was*'; 'No man was better skilled in artifice *than he was*.'\* It is a very common Parliament-house phrase, and therefore presumably *corrupt*; but it is a Dr. Johnson phrase, too: 'Pope, *than whom* few men had more vanity.' The doctor did not say, 'Myself, *than whom* few men have been found more base, having, in my dictionary, described a pensioner as a slave of state, and having afterward myself become a pensioner.'

"I differ in this matter from Bishop Lowth, who says that 'the relative *who*, having reference to no verb or

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\* "Cromwell—*than he*, no man was more skilled in artifice; or, Cromwell—no man was more skilled in artifice *than he* [was]."

preposition understood, but only to its antecedent, when it follows *than*, is *always in the objective case*; even though the pronoun, if substituted in its place, would be in the nominative'; and then he gives an instance from Milton: 'Beelzebub, *than whom*, Satan except, none higher sat.' It is curious enough that this sentence of the bishop is itself ungrammatical! Our poor unfortunate *it* is so placed as to make it a matter of doubt whether the bishop meant it to relate to *who* or to *its antecedent*. However, we know its meaning; but though he says that *who*, when it follows *than*, is always in the objective case, he gives us no reason for this departure from a clear general principle; unless we are to regard as a reason the example of Milton, who has committed many hundreds, if not thousands, of grammatical errors, many of which the bishop himself has pointed out. There is a sort of side-wind attempt at reason in the words, 'having reference to no *verb* or *preposition* understood.' I do not see the *reason*, even if this could be; but it appears to me impossible that a noun or pronoun can exist in a grammatical state without having reference to some *verb* or *preposition*, either expressed or understood. What is meant by Milton? 'Than Beelzebub, none *sat* higher, except Satan.' And when, in order to avoid the repetition of the word Beelzebub, the relative becomes necessary, the full construction must be, 'No devil sat higher *than who* sat, except Satan'; and not, 'No devil sat higher *than whom* sat.'\* The supposition that there can be a noun or pronoun which has reference to no *verb* and no *preposition*, is certainly a mistake."

Of this, Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall remarks, in his Recent Exemplifications of False Philology: "That any one but Cobbett would abide this as English is highly improbable;

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\* "No devil sat higher than *he* sat, except Satan."

and how the expression—a quite classical one—which he discards can be justified grammatically, except by calling its *than* a preposition, others may resolve at their leisure and pleasure."

**Thanks.** There are many persons that think it in questionable taste to use "*Thanks*" for "*Thank you*."

**That.** This word is sometimes vulgarly used as an adverb instead of *so*; thus, *that* headstrong, *that* angry, *that* excitable, and so forth.

*That* is not infrequently repeated to the great detriment of the sentence, thus, "I tell him that if you were to hear him speak English—which he does in the prettiest manner—*that* you could not refrain from kissing him."

"We can not help imagining that upon starting with a fair wind on a voyage of only a day and a half *that* our arrival will be speedy in proportion to the favor of the breeze."

*That* is also improperly used in the sense of *such a*; thus, "The confusion had now reached *that* degree," etc.

**That—Which—Who.** Owing to the indiscriminate, haphazard use of the relative pronouns that almost universally prevails, there is never, probably, a newspaper, and rarely a book, printed in the English language in which there are not ambiguous sentences; and yet this ambiguity can be easily avoided, as we see if we give the subject a little attention.

So long as we continue to use the relative pronouns indiscriminately, the meaning of all but one of the following six sentences—which are all grammatically and idiomatically correct—and of all like sentences, will be doubtful:

I. These are the master's rules, who must be obeyed.

2. These are the rules of the master, who must be obeyed.

3. These are the rules of the master, that must be obeyed.

4. These are the rules of the master, which must be obeyed.

5. These are the master's rules, which must be obeyed.

6. These are the master's rules, that must be obeyed.

Nos. 1 and 2 should mean : These are the rules of the master, and he must be obeyed ; but they may mean : These are the rules of a certain one of several masters, and this one is the one we must obey.

No. 3 may mean : Of the master's rules, these are the ones that must be obeyed. It may also mean : Of several masters, these are the rules of the one whose rules must be obeyed.

Nos. 4 and 5 may mean : These are the rules of the master, and they must be obeyed ; or they may mean : Of the rules of the master, these are the ones that must be obeyed.

*That* is properly the *restrictive relative* pronoun, and *which* and *who* are properly the *co-ordinating relative* pronouns. *That*, when properly used, introduces something without which the antecedent *is not fully defined*, whereas *which* and *who*, when properly used, introduce a *new fact* concerning the antecedent.

Whenever a clause restricts, limits, defines, qualifies the antecedent—i. e., whenever it is adjectival, explanatory in its functions—it should be introduced with the relative pronoun *that*, and not with *which*, nor with *who* or *whom*.

The use of *that* solely to introduce restrictive clauses, and *who* and *which* solely to introduce co-ordinating clauses, avoids ambiguities that must occasionally come

of using the relative pronouns indiscriminately. This clearly appears from the following examples :

"I met the watchman *who* showed me the way." Does this mean, "I met the watchman and he showed me the way"? or does it mean that, of several watchmen I met, the one that on some previous occasion showed me the way? It should mean the former, and it would mean that and nothing else, if we discriminated in using *who* and *that*.

"And fools *who* came to scoff remained to pray." Does the familiar line from Goldsmith mean, And the fools that came, though they came to scoff, remained to pray? or does it mean that some of the fools that came, came to scoff, and these remained to pray? Probably the former is the meaning ; but as the line stands, this, no matter how general the opinion, can be only conjectured, as every one must admit that the meaning intended may be the latter. If the latter is the meaning, it is clear that the proper relative to use is *that*. Had, however, Goldsmith never used *who*, except to introduce co-ordination, we should know positively just what he intended to convey.

"It is requested that all members of Council *who* are also members of the Lands Committee will assemble in the Council room." Does this mean that all the members of Council are also members of the Lands Committee, and that they shall assemble? or does it mean that *such* members of Council as are also members of the Lands Committee shall assemble?

"The volume is recommended to all geologists *to whom* the Secondary rocks of England are a subject of interest." Is the volume recommended to *all* geologists, or to *such only* as take an interest in Secondary rocks?

"He had commuted the sentence of the Circassian



officers *who* had conspired against Arabi Bey and his fellow-ministers—a proceeding which [that] naturally incensed the so-called Egyptian party.” Did all the Circassian officers conspire, or only a part of them?

“On the ground floor of the hotel there are three parlors *which* are never used.” Does this mean three of the parlors on the ground floor are not used? or does it mean the three parlors on the ground floor are not used? The latter is probably the meaning intended, but as there is no comma after *parlors*, the former, using the relatives indiscriminately as we do, is the meaning expressed.

“Emin Bey, the chief, *who* leaped the wall on horseback and landed safely on the *débris* below, was afterward taken into favor.” Here the language and the punctuation convey the impression that Emin Bey was the sole chief, when in fact he was only one of the many chiefs that were present on the occasion referred to. The thought intended is expressed thus: “Emin Bey, the chief *that* leaped the wall, . . . was afterward taken into favor.”

“His conduct surprised his English friends *who* had not known him long.” Does this mean *all* his English friends, or only those of them that had not known him long? If the former is the meaning, then *who* is the proper relative to use with a comma; if the latter, then *that* should be used, without a comma.

“Agents of the Turkish Government are trying to close the Protestant schools in Asia Minor, *which* are conducted by missionaries from the United States.” Are the Turks trying to close all the Protestant schools in Asia Minor, or only a part of them? All, according to this statement; but that is probably not what is intended, as there are doubtless Protestant schools in Asia Minor that are not conducted by missionaries from the United States.

"The police captains *who* yesterday visited the central office to draw their pay, all expressed their sympathy," etc. Did all the police captains visit the central office, or only a part of them?

"The youngest boy *who* has learned to dance is James." As long as we use *who* for the purposes of both *restriction* and *co-ordination*, this means either, "The youngest boy is James, *and he* has learned to dance," or, "Of the boys, the youngest that has learned to dance is James." If the latter is the meaning, then *that* should have been used; if the former, then *who* is correctly used, but the co-ordinate clause should have been isolated with commas.

*Who* and *which* are the proper *co-ordinating* relatives—i. e., the relatives to use when the antecedent is completely expressed without the help of the clause introduced with the relative. Thus: "The society now numbers nearly twenty members, *who* (=and they) have given up all family ties and devoted themselves entirely to religious work." "The choir consists of about sixty men and boys, *who* are surpliced." "But some of their friends, *who* (=persons that) are wealthy and influential members of the church, did not like to have them give up their work in Boston, *which* had been attended with great results, and urged them to return, *which* they have consented to do, and they will soon begin work anew at the old church, *which* is the property of the Society of St. John the Evangelist."

Here are some examples of the correct use of *who*, *which*, *that*, and *whom*: "The heirs, *who* are very numerous, will be present"—i. e., all the heirs. "The heirs, *who* have been notified, will be present"—i. e., all the heirs. "The heirs *that* have been notified will be present"—i. e., only those notified. "The heirs, *whom* I have seen, will be present"—i. e., all the heirs. "The heirs *that* I have

seen will be present"—i. e., only those seen. "I study grammar, *which* I like very much." "Give me the grammar *that* lies on the desk." "He struck the man *who*"—i. e., a certain man—"had done him no harm." "He struck the man *that*"—i. e., a man of several men—"insulted him." "He struck the wrong man—the one *that* had done him no harm." "Our house, *which* is built of brick, is very warm." "The house *that* is built of brick is the warmest." "The cat"—i. e., the species—" *which* you so dislike is a useful animal." "The cat"—i. e., the individual—" *that* you so dislike is a very pretty one." "He jumped into the water, *which* greatly frightened his mother." "He attends to his own affairs, *which* is the way to make them prosper." "He *that* attends to his own affairs is likely to see them prosper." "The man *that* I saw is tall." "This man, *whom* I know, well, is a good plowman." "He *that* lets the sun go down on his wrath," etc.

In the following example the errors in the use of the relatives are corrected in brackets: "The rich despise those *who* [that] flatter too much, and hate those *who* [that] do not flatter at all." "An ambitious man *whom* [that] you can serve will often aid you to rise," etc. "He *that* feeds man serveth few; he serveth all *who* [that] dares be true." "The curious inquirer *who* [that] sets himself," etc. "This book has been made for those *who* [that] aim to have," etc. "The people *who* [that] are expecting, under the new code . . . The people will not consent, under a Government *which* [that] depends upon their will, to adopt the Sabbatarian notions *which* [that] the old Puritans . . . Yet there are some narrow minds in New York *who* [that] still think . . . They have no sympathy with those *who* [that] would force . . . Then there are the Jews, *who* do not feel . . . and *who* claim the right to

work or play on Sunday . . . The population would be sunk in gloom, *which* would of course," etc.

It is necessary, for the proper understanding of *which*, to advert to its peculiar function of referring to a whole clause as the antecedent: "William ran along the top of the wall, *which* alarmed his mother very much." The antecedent is obviously not the noun "wall," but the fact expressed by the entire clause—"William ran," etc. "He by no means wants sense, *which* only serves to aggravate his former folly"; namely, (not "sense," but) the circumstance "that he does not want sense." "He is neither overexalted by prosperity nor too much depressed by misfortune, *which* you must allow marks a great mind." "We have done many things *which* we ought not to have done" might mean "we ought not *to have done many things*"—that is, "we ought to have done few things." *That* would give the exact sense intended: "We have done many things *that* we ought not to have done." *That* is much more frequently used instead of *who* as a restrictive relative than will be at first supposed. As evidence of this I offer a sentence that I find in a London cablegram to a New York newspaper: "It was he *that* moved the adjournment until Tuesday." This, in my judgment, is better and more idiomatic English than it would have been had the writer used *who* instead of *that*.

Occasionally, but by no means often, we meet with a *that* that should be *which*. Here are two such *whiches*:

"Across the Straits of Fuca there is the pretty English town of Victoria *that* [which] has as solid mansions," etc.

"The Strait or Gulf of Georgia, *that* [which] separates Vancouver Island from the mainland, although," etc.

There is not, as some of the unthinking seem to believe, any valid objection to using two *thats* in immediate

succession, as in the utterance they are widely different. Thus used, they are not at all disturbing, not at all tautophonic. Two successive *thats* are tautophonic to the eye only. The demonstrative *that* always has its full name sound, while the other *that*, be it a conjunction or a relative, is barely touched; thus, "I say th't THAT book is old." "Where is THAT th't I gave you?" Indeed, three successive *thats* are not at all disturbing—e. g., "They, therefore, that treat of these subjects more boldly, venture to say th't THAT th't is base is the only evil."

"Who is *that that* dares to address the court?"—Dickens.

"We must next allude to the cases where the relative is governed by a preposition. We can use a preposition before *who* (in the objective case *whom*) and *which*, but when the relative is *that* the preposition must be thrown to the end of the clause. *Owing to an imperfect appreciation of the genius of our language, offense was taken at this usage by some of our leading writers at the beginning of last century, and to this circumstance we must refer the disuse of that as the relative of restriction.*"—Bain's Grammar.

"*That* can not be preceded by a preposition, and hence throws the preposition to the end. 'This is the rule *that* I adhere *to*.' *This is perfectly good English, though sometimes unnecessarily avoided.*"—Abbott's How to Write Clearly.

"In every other language the preposition is almost constantly prefixed to the noun which [that] it governs; in English it is sometimes placed not only after the noun, but at a considerable distance from it, as in the following example: 'The infirmary was, indeed, never so full as on this day, *which* I was at some loss to account *for*.' Here no fewer than seven words intervene between the relative

*which* and the preposition *for* belonging to it. One would imagine, to consider the matter abstractly, that this could not fail in a language like ours, which admits so few inflections, to create obscurity. Yet this is seldom, if ever, the consequence. Indeed, the singularity of the idiom hath made some critics condemn it absolutely. That there is nothing analogous in any known tongue, ancient or modern, hath appeared to them a sufficient reason. *I own it never appeared so to me.*"—Dr. Campbell's Rhetoric.

The constant placing of the preposition before the relative tends to make a writer's style turgid, ponderous—sometimes, in fact, almost unidiomatic. It makes one's diction differ too widely from the diction of everyday life, which is the diction much the best suited to many kinds of composition.

The following examples, taken from Massinger's Grand Duke of Florence, will show what was the usage of the Elizabethan writers :

"For I must use the freedom *I was born with.*"

"In that dumb rhetoric *which you make use of.*"

" . . . if I had been heir

Of all the globes and scepters mankind *bows to.*"

" . . . the name of friend

*Which* you are pleased to *grace me with.*"

" . . . willfully ignorant, in my opinion,

Of what it did *invite him to.*"

"I look to her as on a princess

*I dare not be ambitious of.*"

" . . . a duty

*That I was born with.*"

So in Shakespeare, to take an example out of many :

"To have no screen between the part he played

And him he *played it for.*"

"Why, there is not a single sentence in this play *that* I do not know the meaning *of*."—Addison.

"Originality is a thing we constantly clamor *for* and constantly quarrel *with*."—Carlyle.

It will be observed that the relative, when it is the object, is often omitted.

"It was not one *with which* he could find fault"; better, "One he could find fault *with*."

"It will be a joy *to which* I have looked forward with hope"; better, "A joy *that* I have looked forward to with hope."

"You are the first one *to whom* I have unburdened my mind"; better, "First one I have unburdened my mind *to*."

"The man *to whom* I refer"; better, "The man I refer *to*."

"Don't whip with a switch *that* has the leaves *on* if you want to tingle."—Beecher. How much of its idiomatic terseness this sentence would lose if changed to, "Don't whip with a switch *on which* there are leaves," or *on which* the leaves remain, or *from which* the leaves have not been removed!

The more thought one gives to the matter the more one will be inclined, I think, to discriminate in the use of the relative pronouns, and the less one will be opposed to that construction that puts the governing preposition at the end.

**The.** Careless writers sometimes write sheer nonsense, or say something very different from what they have in their minds, by the simple omission of the definite article; thus, "The indebtedness of the English tongue to the French, Latin and Greek is disclosed in almost every sentence framed." According to this, there is such a thing as a French, Latin and Greek tongue. Professor Townsend

meant to say, "The indebtedness of the English tongue to the French, *the* Latin, and *the* Greek," etc.

"The old and [the] new opinions had their active partisans within the walls of the college."

"This construction," Dr. Hodgson remarks, "is correct according to some grammarians, who hold that, if the noun is in the plural, the article must precede the first adjective only. But their rule takes no account of the ambiguity of such sentences as this: 'They drowned the black and white kittens.' Does this mean 'The kittens that were white with black spots,' or 'the kittens that were white and the kittens that were black'? 'The white and black kittens' in the one case, and 'the white and *the* black kittens' in the other, leave no room for ambiguity."

**Then.** The use of this word as an adjective is condemned in very emphatic terms by some of our grammarians, and yet this use of it has the sanction of such eminent writers as Addison, Johnson, Whately, and Sir J. Hawkins. Johnson says, "In his *then* situation," which, if brevity be really the soul of wit, certainly has much more soul in it than "In the situation he then occupied." However, it is doubtful whether *then*, as an adjective, will ever again find favor with careful writers.

**Thence.** See WHENCE.

**Think for.** We not infrequently hear a superfluous *for* tacked to a sentence; thus, "You will find that he knows more about the affair than you think *for*."

"These men, if you watch them, you will see have an eye to business in everything, and, content with small profits and quick turns, they make in speculation in the street or in pools more than people think *for*."—N. Y. Times.



**Those kind.** "*Those* kind of apples *are* best" : read, "*That* kind of apples *is* best." It is truly remarkable that many persons who can justly lay claim to the possession of considerable culture use this barbarous combination. It would be just as correct to say, "Those flock of geese," or "Those or these drove of cattle," as to say, "Those or these *sort* or *kind* of people."

A plural pronoun and a singular noun do not go well together.

**Threadbare quotations.** Among the things that are in bad taste in speaking and writing, the use of threadbare quotations and expressions is in the front rank. Some of these *usés et cassés* old-timers are the following :

"Their name is legion" ; "Hosts of friends" ; "The upper ten" ; "Variety is the spice of life" ; "Distance lends enchantment to the view" ; "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" ; "The light fantastic toe" ; "Own the soft impeachment" ; "Fair women and brave men" ; "Revelry by night" ; "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

**Through.** When used in the sense of *have finished* is an Americanism. The locution "I am *through*" is seldom heard in Great Britain.

**Tidings.** See NEWS.

**To.** We often find *to*, when the sign of the infinitive, separated by an adverb from the verb to which it belongs. Prof. A. P. Peabody says that no standard English writer makes this mistake, and that, as far as he knows, it occurs frequently with but one respectable American writer.

"*To*, as the sign of the infinitive," says Godfrey Turner, "as in *to think, to write, to say*, is as much a part or particle of the verb as it would be if placed at the end as an inflection. We should not do amiss, I think, were we to join it

on with a hyphen ; thus, *to-think, to-write, to-say*. There are authors, however, who carelessly or conceitedly break up what is to all intents and purposes one word, by wedging an adverb into its body. The habitual phrasing of such writers is 'to mathematically think,' 'to elegantly write,' 'to cogently say.' Not only adverbs, but whole adverbial phrases, are now thrust between the particle *to* and the main body of the verb. '*To* in a certain measure *accept*,' is a fine specimen, which I captured a few days ago in the jungle of a leading article."

Careful writers and speakers separate *to* from the infinitive mood only when they have some special reason for doing so. It is one of the things that every dictionist nowadays seeks to avoid.

"*To never more* [never more to] engage with so deceptive an adversary."—Phila. Ledger.

"The bill is described as an act *to better* [better to] protect public morals."

"There is a disposition not *to tamely* [tamely to] yield."—N. Y. Sun.

"It would puzzle the average lawyer *to properly* [properly to] determine," etc.—Evening Sun.

"Admiral S. will go to Formosa *to formally* [formally to] annex the island."—N. Y. Sun.

"It is said that China hopes *to easily* [easily to] procure in France funds to enable her *to promptly* [promptly to] pay the indemnity."—N. Y. Sun.

It is a rule of grammar that *to*, the sign of the infinitive mood, should not be used for the infinitive itself ; thus, "He has not done it, nor is he likely *to*." Strictly, "nor is he likely *to do it*." To observe this rule always would be rather pedantic.

Very often *to* is misused for *at* ; thus, "I have been *to*

the theater, *to* church, *to* my uncle's, *to* a concert," and so on. In all these cases the preposition to use is clearly *at*, and not *to*. See also AND.

Often used redundantly; as, "Where are you going *to*?" "Where have you been *to*?"

**To the fore.** An old idiomatic phrase, now freely used again.

**Tongue.** "Much *tongue* and much judgment seldom go together."—L'Estrange. See LANGUAGE. See page 324.

**Toward.** Those that profess to know about such things say that etymology furnishes no pretext for the adding of *s* to *ward* in such words as *backward*, *forward*, *toward*, *upward*, *onward*, *downward*, *afterward*, *heavenward*, *earthward*, and the like.

**Transferred epithet.** This is the shifting of a qualifying word from its proper subject to some allied subject. Examples:

"The little fields made green

By husbandry of many *thrifty* years."

"He plods his *weary* way." "Hence to your *idle* bed!"

By this figure the diction is rendered more terse and vigorous; it is much used in verse. For the sake of conciseness, it is used in prose in such phrases as the *lunatic asylum*, the *criminal court*, the *condemned cell*, the *blind asylum*, the *cholera hospital*, the *foundling asylum*, and the like.

"Still in harmonious intercourse they lived

The rural day, and talked the flowing heart."

"There be some who [that], with everything to make them happy, plod their discontented and melancholy way through life, less grateful than the dog that licks the hand that feeds it."

**Transpire.** This is one of the most frequently mis-

used words in the language. Its primary meaning is, to evaporate insensibly through the pores, but in this sense it is not used; in this sense we use its twin sister, *perspire*. *Transpire* is now properly used in the sense of to escape from secrecy; to become known; to leak out; and improperly used in the sense of to occur; to happen; to come to pass, and to elapse.

The word is correctly used thus: "You will not let a word concerning the matter *transpire*"; "It *transpires* [leaks out] that S. & B. control the enterprise"; "Soon after the funeral it *transpired* [became known] that the dead woman was alive"; "It has *transpired* [leaked out] that the movement originated with John Blank"; "No report of the proceedings was allowed to *transpire*"; "It has not yet *transpired* who the candidate is to be"; "At the examination it *transpired* that Pook has a wife and four children."

The word is incorrectly used thus:

"The Mexican war *transpired* in 1847"; "The drill will *transpire* under shelter"; "The accident *transpired* one day last week"; "Years will *transpire* before it will be finished"; "More than a century *transpired* before it was revisited by civilized man."

"The verb *transpire* formerly conveyed very expressively its correct meaning, viz., to become known through unnoticed channels; to exhale, as it were, into publicity through invisible pores, like a vapor or [a] gas disengaging itself. But of late a practice has commenced of employing this word . . . as a mere synonym of *to happen*. This vile specimen of bad English is already seen in the dispatches of noblemen and viceroys."—Mill.

Mr. Edgar Fawcett uses *transpire* in a manner peculiarly his own, as we see by the following example:

"My indignation had meanwhile *transpired*, and gossip boiled and bubbled at The Metropolitan."

**Trifling minutiae.** The meaning of *trifles* and the meaning of *minutiae* are so nearly the same that no one probably ever uses the phrase *trifling minutiae* except from thoughtlessness.

**Trustworthy.** See RELIABLE.

**Try.** This word is often improperly used for *make*. We *make* experiments, not *try* them, which is as incorrect as it would be to say, *try* the *attempt*, or the *trial*.

**Try and.** Often very improperly used for *try to*. We *try to* be on time, *to* know our lessons, *to* speak correctly, *to* do our best, etc.

**Twice over.** The *over*, in a sentence like the following, serves no purpose :

"Now, to say a thing twice *over* in different ways is as much a waste of energy as," etc.—Dr. Hodgson.

*Say over* is used here, it will be seen, in the sense of express.

**Ugly.** In England this word is restricted to meaning ill-favored ; with us it is often used—and not without authority—in the sense of ill-tempered, vicious, unmanageable. H. Reeves says that a British traveler, walking one day in the suburbs of Boston, saw a woman whipping a screaming child. "Good woman," said he, "why do you whip the boy so severely?" She answered, "Because he is so *ugly*." The Englishman walked on, and put down in his journal : "Mem. American mothers are so cruel as to whip their children because they are not handsome."

**Unbeknown.** This word is no longer used except by the unschooled.

**Underhanded.** This word, though found in the dictionaries, is a vulgarism, and as such is to be avoided

The proper word is *underhand*. An *underhand*, not an *underhanded*, proceeding.

**Under his signature.** See SIGNATURE.

**Understand.** Sometimes improperly used in the locution *understand about*, which is unidiomatic; the proper word to use being *know*, as in the sentence, "A large number of our graduates certainly *understand* a great deal about the subject."

**Under the circumstances.** "How few," says Prof. Hodgson, "perceive the false metaphor of *under the circumstances*—i. e., the surroundings."

"Mere situation is expressed by '*in the circumstances*'; action affected is performed '*under the circumstances*.'"—Murray's New English Dictionary.

The French say, "*in the circumstances*."

**Unique.** Sometimes improperly used in the sense of *beautiful*. Properly, the word means singular; uncommon; rare; unlike anything else.

**Universal—All.** "He is *universally* esteemed by *all* who know him." If he is *universally* esteemed, he must be esteemed by *all* who know him; and if he is esteemed by *all* who know him, he must be *universally* esteemed. Say, therefore, "He is universally esteemed," or "He is esteemed by all who know him." Either expression covers the whole ground.

**Unless.** Sometimes, though rarely, misused for *except*.

"He did not ask her to be his wife *unless* [except] in public."—Paris Corr. N. Y. Tribune.

**Upon.** Much used where *on* would be more in accordance with the best usage. We call *on* persons, and speak *on* subjects.

**Upward of.** This phrase is often used, if not improperly, at least inelegantly, for *more than*; thus, "I have

been here for *upward of a year*”; “For *upward of* three quarters of a century she has,” etc., meaning, for *more than* three quarters of a century.

**Usage.** Sometimes misused for *use*, though the two words are widely different in meaning. A near synonym of *usage* is *custom*. “With the National Assembly of France, law and *usage* [or custom] are nothing.” A near synonym of *use* is *utility*. “The Greeks, in the heroic age, seem to have been acquainted with the *use* [or utility] of iron.”

Strangely enough, Dr. Hodgson frequently makes this error in his *Errors in the Use of English*. He writes :

“Concerning the *usage* of either and neither as conjunctions,” etc. “But this *usage* [of *prædicare*] never found favor with classic writers either in Latin or in English.” “This *usage* [of *ambition* as a verb] occurs frequently in the Sub-Alpine Kingdom of Mr. Bayle St. John.”

**Use to.** Properly, *used to*. “We *used to* live there”; not, we *use to* live there.

**Usually.** See GENERALLY.

**Utter.** This verb is often misused for *say*, *express*. To *utter* means to *speak*, to *pronounce*; and its derivative *utterance* means the act, manner, or power of uttering, vocal expression; as, “the utterance of articulate sounds.” We *utter* a cry; *express* a thought or sentiment; *speak* our mind; and, though prayers are *said*, they may be *uttered* in a certain tone or manner. “Mr. Blank is right in all he *utters*”: read *says*. “The court *uttered* a sentiment that all will applaud”: read, *expressed* a sentiment.

The primary meaning of the adjective *utter* is outer, on the outside; but it is no longer used in this sense. It is now used in the sense of complete, total, perfect, mere, entire; but he that uses it indiscriminately as a synonym of

these words will frequently utter *utter* nonsense—i. e., he will utter that that is without the pale of sense. For example, we can not say *utter* concord, but we can say *utter* discord—i. e., without the pale of concord.

**Valuable.** The following sentence, which recently appeared in one of the more fastidious of our morning papers, is offered as an example of extreme slipshodness in the use of language: "Sea captains are among the most *valuable* contributors to the Park aviary." What the writer probably meant to say is, "Sea captains are among those whose contributions to the Park aviary are the most valuable." A *valued* contributor would be quite correct. So, also, we say properly, "A *valued* friend."

**Vast.** This word is often met with in forcible-feeble diction, where it is used instead of *great* or *large* to qualify such words as number, majority, multitude, and the like. Big words and expletives should be used only where they are really needed; where they are not really needed they go wide of the object aimed at. The sportsman that hunts small game with buckshot comes home empty-handed.

**Venal—Mercenary.** *Venal* signifies, Ready to be sold; and applied to persons, as it commonly is applied, it is a much stronger term than *mercenary*. Persons that are *venal* are without principle. A *mercenary* spirit is engendered in those that devote themselves exclusively to trade. A person too studious of profit is *mercenary*.

**Venial.** This word, so like *venal* in appearance, is wholly unlike it in meaning. What may be tolerated without express disparagement or direct censure is *venial*. Garburity is a *venial* offence in old age. The synonyms of *venial* are *excusable* and *pardonable*, the two latter being the stronger terms.



**Veracity.** This word, which means, The quality of being truthful, is sometimes misused for *truth*, thus :

“There was no reason to doubt the *veracity* [truth] of those facts.”—Addison.

“These two points have no more to do with the *veracity* [truth] of the Christian religion than chemistry [has].”

*Truth* may be used in speaking both of persons and of facts, while *veracity* is properly used only of persons.

“The *truth* of the story is admitted on the *veracity* of the narrator.”

In the phrase so often heard, “A man of truth and veracity,” *veracity* is entirely superfluous, it having the same meaning as *truth*.

**Verbal.** In strictness this word should not be used in the sense of *oral*, but its use in this sense is sanctioned by the best writers in the language, and also by the dictionaries.

“Without sending as much as a *verbal* message to Mrs. Slope’s note.”

A message in *words*, no matter how sent, is a *verbal* message.

**Verbal ellipses.** We frequently, and very properly, omit a verb in one clause of a sentence, but the ellipsis is permissible only when the form of the verb in the other clause is such that it could take the place of the omitted verb *without any change of form* ; thus, “I am surprised that he has *acted* as he has.” “Have you not *sworn* allegiance to me?” “I have.”

The following are some examples of faulty ellipsis :

“But you will *bear* it as you have [borne] so many things.”

“I am anxious for the time [to come] when he will *talk* as much nonsense to me as I have [talked] to him.”

"That foreign taste may have [exercised] and did *exercise* a powerful influence, is doubtless true."

"Some part of the exemption and liability may [be], and no doubt is, due to mental and physical causes."

"Blake wrote and drew with marvelous genius, but I doubt whether any one has [followed] or would care to *follow* in his steps."

"He ridicules the notion that truth will *prevail*; it never has [prevailed], and it never will [prevail]."

"I never have [attacked] and never will *attack* a man for speculative opinions."

**Verbal nouns.** Often where we find a simple noun, a verb in some shape is required in order properly to express the thought intended. In such cases a verbal [participial] noun will commonly suffice, though often a simple participle, and sometimes a verb in the infinitive, would better the diction.

"The compiler's part has been limited, first, to the *selection* of the objects of portraiture; secondly, the *choice* of the historians from whom extracts should be made; and, third, the *preparation* of short prefatory notes restricted to an outline of dates and incidents."—N. Y. Sun.

Not so. The compiler's part has been limited to the *selecting*, the *choosing*, and the *preparing*. True, the writer's diction is very common; we see it every day and everywhere, but that does not make it correct. The compiler's part was to *do* something, and we can not express *doing* with a simple noun. If the writer had taken more time he would probably have written *objects to portray* instead of *objects of portraiture*.

"We infer from the bold attitude of the Union Leaguers in regard to the *taxation* [taxing] of the liquor traffic that the club means at last to apply for a license."—N. Y. Sun.

"The Government refuses to accept the proposals for an arrangement touching the national debt, the *construction* [constructing] of a railroad to Quito, and the *establishment* [establishing] of an official bank."

"The organization created *for the completion of* [to complete] the fund is now moving."

"Although the fund required *for the completion of* [to complete] this monumental tomb," etc. The participial form would do, but the infinitive is very much better. See NOUN CONSTRUCTION.

**Verbiage.** An unnecessary profusion of words is called *verbiage*: verbosity, wordiness.

"I thought what I read of it *verbiage*."—Johnson.

Sometimes a better name than *verbiage* for wordiness would be *emptiness*. Witness:

"Clearness may be developed and cultivated in three ways. (a) By constantly practicing in heart and life the thoughts and ways of honesty and frankness." The first sentence evidently means, "Clearness may be *attained* in three ways"; but what the second sentence means—if it means anything—is more than I can tell. Professor L. T. Townsend, *Art of Speech*, vol. i, p. 130, adds: "This may be regarded as the surest path to greater transparency of style." The transparency of Dr. Townsend's style is peculiar. Also, p. 144, we find: "The laws and rules<sup>1</sup> thus far laid down<sup>2</sup> furnish ample foundation for<sup>3</sup> the general statement that an easy and natural<sup>4</sup> expression, an exact verbal incarnation of one's thinking,<sup>5</sup> together with the power of using appropriate figures, and of making nice discriminations between approximate synonyms,<sup>6</sup> each being an important factor in correct style, are attained in two ways:<sup>7</sup> (1) Through moral<sup>8</sup> and mental discipline; (2) Through continuous and intimate<sup>9</sup>

acquaintance with such authors as best exemplify those attainments." <sup>10</sup>

1. Would not *laws* cover the whole ground? 2. *En passant* I would remark that Dr. Townsend did not make these laws, though he so intimates. 3. I suggest the word *justify* in place of these four. 4. What is natural is easy; *easy*, therefore, is superfluous. 5. If this means anything, it does not mean more than the adjective *clear* would express, if properly used in the sentence. 6. *Approximate* synonyms!! Who ever heard of any antagonistic or even of dissimilar synonyms? 7. The transparency of this sentence is not unlike the transparency of corrugated glass. 8. What has morality to do with correctness? 9. An intimate acquaintance would suffice for most people. 10. Those attainments! What are they? Dr. Townsend's corrugated style makes it hard to tell.

This paragraph is so badly conceived throughout that it is well-nigh impossible to make head, middle, or tail of it; still, if I am at all successful in guessing what Professor Townsend wanted to say in it, then—when shorn of its redundancy and high-flown emptiness—it will read somewhat like this: "The laws thus far presented justify the general statement that a clear and natural mode of expression—together with that art of using appropriate figures and that ability properly to discriminate between synonyms that are necessary to correctness—is attained in two ways: (1) By mental discipline; (2) By the study of our best authors."

The following sentence is from a leading magazine: "If we begin a system of interference, *regulating men's gains*, bolstering here, *in order to strengthen this interest*, [and] repressing *elsewhere* [there], in order to equalize wealth, we shall do *an [a] immense* deal of mischief, and without bring-

ing about a more agreeable condition of things *than now* [we] shall *simply* discourage enterprise, repress industry, and check material growth *in all directions*." Read without the eighteen words in italics and with the four inclosed.

"Nothing disgusts sooner than the empty pomp of language."

"The rule now," Godfrey Turner says, "is to speak as verbosely as possible. We say, 'A certain person informed me that such was the case,' when there was no case, when the person was not certain, when he may or may not have been a person, and when he neither did nor could inform. The old way of speaking would have been, 'somebody told me so.' This is sense and grammar; there are four words instead of ten to speak, sixteen letters instead of forty-two to write; and, written or said, there is precision against gibberish."

Men that write in this manner never would have any idea of the true art of expression, if they were to continue to write till doomsday. They always lack that without which no man ever writes really well—the gift of clear-seeing; a thing it would be impossible to convince them of, because they see what they see to see, and what they see they think is all there is to see. They belong to a class of persons that find felicity in ignorance, and they are commonly so panoplied with conceit that nothing can lessen their estimate of their merits.

**Very.** "In the third edition of Professor Maximilian Müller's Lectures on the Science of Language we are informed that 'in fact, *very* pleased and *very* delighted are Americanisms that may be heard even in this country.' . . . The phrases just named become, however, in Professor Müller's fourth edition, simply 'expressions that may be heard in many drawing-rooms.' . . . And there they were heard,

without question, four or five centuries ago."—Fitz-Edward Hall. "Before participles, *very* is followed by *much*, or, more rarely, by some nearly equivalent adverb."—Webster.

"This little word is often used in the English language when a sentence would be much stronger and the meaning much more forcible without it. If a man has not much hair on the top of his head, it is not enough for people to say simply that he is bald : he is *very* bald. A man is not stingy : he is *very* stingy—when the one good strong word 'stingy' would put the whole point forcibly. A doctor of divinity is not learned, but *very* learned ; a doctor of medicine is not crotchety—he is *very* crotchety ; while a lawyer is not cunning, but *very* cunning. In the same way, a young lady is not handsome, but *very* handsome. The qualifier has become so common that it is weakening to the word it is joined to. In nine cases out of ten where *very* is used to intensify human speech, a single, bold word without the *very* would hit the meaning like a hammer, and drive it home with a directness unknown to clogged and hampered expression.

"*Very* seems to be a word designed by Providence for young ladies to express their feelings with. This portion of the community probably could not get on without their adverb, but the English of the rest of the race would be strengthened if the little qualifier were delegated almost wholly to the fair class to whom it belongs. It creeps into our literature as insidiously as the measles into a family of fifteen, and, once there, it stays like an office-seeker. It breaks out everywhere, even in the most high-toned and 'cultivated' writing. A newspaper that is authority on the art of literary composition prints, for instance, a thrilling description of a brilliant party. Every lady present was

*very* much this or that. Mrs. Blank, who was a *very* intimate friend of Mrs. General Dash, wore a *very* handsome green satin dress, and had a *very* handsome silver comb in her back hair. Mrs. General Dash wore an exceedingly becoming dress, which was *very* elaborately made. Two young ladies, whose dresses were exceedingly becoming and *very* graceful, were accompanied by a young man who had a *very* light mustache. Everybody was either *very*, or *exceedingly*, or *most highly* something. The air bristled with superlatives.

"It combines instruction with amusement to count the *veries* in a column of newspaper advertisements. A 'general housework' applicant is not content with being a respectable woman and a good cook; she is a *very* respectable woman and a *very* good cook. It is enough, in all conscience, to be said of a woman that she is a superior waitress. Superior itself means better than good, but this uncommon waitress tacks on the word *very*, too, and thus becomes very better than good.

"The climax of veriness is reached, however, by a girl. She is 'a *very* competent cook, understands waiting at table in a *very* efficient manner, and is in all respects *very* first-class.' 'In all respects very first-class qualifications' is good. It is only equaled by the young man who was a *very* perfect horseman and rode a *very* black horse. A fine example, too, of the redundant *very* is the reply of the old tar that was blown overboard at Trafalgar, and long afterward, being asked by a sympathetic lady how he felt on that occasion, answered, 'Wet, ma'am, *very* wet.'"—Cincinnati Commercial.

**Vice.** See CRIME.

**Vicinity.** This word is sometimes incorrectly used without the possessive pronoun; thus, "Washington and

vicinity," instead of "Washington and *its* vicinity." The primary meaning of *vicinity* is nearness, proximity.

*Vicinity* does not express so close a connection as *neighborhood*, which is employed more especially to inhabited places. *Vicinity* is employed to denote nearness of one locality to another. We could, therefore, say, "I live in a quiet *neighborhood* in the *vicinity* of Boston."

"The Dutch, by the *vicinity* of their settlements to the coast, gradually engrossed the cocoa trade."

"When the house was discovered to be on fire, every one in the *neighborhood* hastened to give assistance."

"For the thirty-six hours ending at 8 P. M. on Wednesday for New York and [its, or the] vicinity," etc.—N. Y. Evening Sun.

The morning Sun always writes, "and *its* vicinity."

**Vocation—Avocation.** These words are frequently confounded. A man's *vocation* is his profession, his calling, his business; and his *avocations* are the things that occupy him incidentally. Mademoiselle Bernhardt's *vocation* is acting; her *avocations* are painting and sculpture. See AVOCATION.

**Voice.** Often misused for *tone*, thus:

"I made no application," Mr. Henriques broke in in a loud *voice*, "and when Laidlaw says that I did, he," etc.—N. Y. Times.

Should be, "in a loud *tone of voice*," or "in a loud *tone*."

"But the words were spoken without the accompaniments of languishing eyes and sympathetic *voice* [tones]."—Hammond.

With *tones* the "balance" of the sentence is much improved.

**Vulgar.** By the many, this word is probably more fre-



quently used improperly than properly. As a noun, it means the common people, the lower orders, the multitude, the many; as an adjective, it means coarse, low, unrefined, as, "the *vulgar* people." The sense in which it is misused is that of immodest, indecent.

"The word 'vulgarity' was formerly thought to mean indecent; now it means simply bad manners. To be *vulgar* is to be inadmissible to society. *Vulgar* people are low, mean, coarse, plebeian, no matter where the ever-turning wheel of fortune has placed them."—The Queen.

**Was.** "He said he had come to the conclusion that there *was* no God." "The greatest of Byron's works *was* his whole work taken together."—Matthew Arnold. What is true at all times should be expressed by using the verb in the present tense. The sentences above should read *is*, not *was*.

"There have been some men who denied that there *was* [is] a God."—Capel.

**Was given.** Tendered, or presented. See PASSIVE.

**Way.** Often used for *away*, in such sentences as, "Way down East," "From *way* back," "He made *way* with the money." In strictness, the word to use is *away*.

**Ways.** Erroneously used for *way*; as, "The river is a long *ways* off."

**Well.** "Used by Americans with peculiar fondness to begin almost every sentence, especially an answer to a question. This custom seems to have originated in New England, where it still most generally prevails, in order to gain time before replying, as the Yankee is accused of answering only with a new question."—De Vere.

**Wharf.** See DOCK.

**What.** "He would not believe but *what* I did it": read, but *that*. "I do not doubt *but what* I shall go to

Boston to-morrow": read, doubt *that*. We say properly, "I have nothing *but what* you see"; "You have brought everything *but what* I wanted."

We sometimes hear a redundant *what* in sentences like these: "I have read more than *what* you think I have." "They were no larger than *what* he was."

**Whence.** As this adverb means, unaided, *from* what place, source, or cause, it is, as Dr. Johnson styled it, "a vicious mode of speech" to say *from whence*, Milton to the contrary notwithstanding. Nor is there any more propriety in the phrase *from thence*, as *thence* means, unaided, from that place. "*Whence* do you come?" not "*From whence* do you come?" Likewise, "He went *hence*," not "*from hence*."

**Whether.** This conjunction is often improperly repeated in a sentence; thus, "I have not decided whether I shall go to Boston or *whether I shall go* to Philadelphia." Properly, "To Boston or to Philadelphia."

"Whether I go or *not*, what difference does it make?" is the form of expression that no one finds fault with, while "Whether . . . *no*" is objected to by many, and among these we find, for the most part, the better informed.

**Which.** This pronoun, as an *interrogative*, applies to *persons* as well as to *things*; as a *relative*, it is now made to refer to *things only*.

"*Which* is employed in co-ordinate sentences, where *it* or *they*, and a conjunction, might answer the purpose; thus, 'At school I studied geometry, *which* [and it] I found useful afterward.' Here the new clause is something independent added to the previous clause, and not limiting that clause in any way. So in the adjectival clause; as, 'He struck the poor dog, *which* [and it, or although it] had never done him harm.' Such instances represent the most

accurate meaning of *which*. *Who* and *which* might be termed the CO-ORDINATING RELATIVES.

"*Which* is likewise used in *restrictive* clauses that limit or explain the antecedent ; as, 'The house *which* he built still remains.' Here the clause introduced by *which* specifies, or points out, the house that is the subject of the statement, namely, by the circumstance that a certain person built it. Our most idiomatic writers prefer *that* in this particular application, and would say, 'The house *that* he built still remains.'"

"*Which* sometimes has a special reference attaching to it, as the neuter relative : 'Cæsar crossed the Rubicon, *which* was in effect a declaration of war.' The antecedent in this instance is not *Rubicon*, but the entire clause.

"There is a peculiar usage where *which* may *seem* to be still regularly used in reference to persons, as in 'John is a soldier, *which* I should like to be' ; that is, 'And I should like *to be a soldier*.'" See THAT, WHICH, WHO.

**Which, Who, That.** See THAT, WHICH, WHO.

**Who.** There are few persons, even among the most cultivated, that do not make frequent mistakes in the use of this pronoun. They say, "*Who* did you see ?" "*Who* did you meet ?" "*Who* did he marry ?" "*Who* did you hear ?" "*Who* did he know ?" "*Who* are you writing to ?" "*Who* are you looking at ?" In all these sentences the interrogative pronoun is in the objective case, and should be used in the objective form, which is *whom*, and not *who*. To show that these sentences are not correct, and are not defensible by supposing any ellipsis whatsoever, we have only to put the questions in another form. Take the first one, and, instead of "Who did you see ?" say, "Who saw you ?" which, if correct, justifies us in saying, "Who knew he ?" which is the equivalent of "Who

did he know?" But "Who saw you?" in this instance, is clearly not correct, since it says directly the opposite of what is intended.

*Who* was little used as a relative till about the sixteenth century. Bain says: "In modern use, more especially in books, *who* is frequently employed to introduce a clause intended to restrict, define, limit, or explain a noun (or its equivalent); as, 'That is the man *who* spoke to us yesterday.'

"Here the clause introduced by *who* is necessary to define or explain the antecedent *the man*; without it, we do not know who *the man* is. Such relative clauses are typical *adjective* clauses—i. e., they have the same effect as adjectives in limiting nouns. This may be called the RESTRICTIVE use of the relative.

"Now it will be found that the practice of our most idiomatic writers and speakers is to prefer *that* to *who* in this application.

"*Who* is properly used in such co-ordinate sentences as, 'I met the watchman, *who* told me there had been a fire.' Here the two clauses are distinct and independent; in such a case, *and he* might be substituted for *who*.

"Another form of the same use is when the second clause is of the kind termed adverbial, where we may resolve *who* into a personal or demonstrative pronoun and conjunction. 'Why should we consult Charles, *who* [*for he, seeing that he*] knows nothing of the matter?'

"*Who* may be regarded as a modern objective form, side by side with *whom*; for many good writers and speakers say '*Who* are you talking of?' '*Who* does the garden belong to?' '*Who* is this for?' '*Who* from?'" etc.

If this be true—if *who* may be regarded as a modern objective form, side by side with *whom*—then, of course,

such expressions as "*Who* did you see?" "*Who* did you meet?" "*Who* did he marry?" "*Who* were you with?" "*Who* will you give it to?" and the like, are correct. That they are used colloquially by well-nigh everybody, no one will dispute; but that they are *correct*, few grammarians will concede. See **THAT**.

**Whole.** This word is sometimes most improperly used for *all*; thus, "The *whole* Germans seem to be saturated with the belief that they are really the greatest people on earth, and that they would be universally recognized as being the greatest, if they were not so exceeding modest." "The *whole* Russians are inspired with the belief that their mission is to conquer the world."—Alison.

**Whole of.** Improperly used for *entire* and for *all*. We say properly, the *entire* audience; not, the *whole of* the audience. *All* the delegates; not, the *whole of* the delegates.

**Wholesome.** See **HEALTHY**.

**Whom.** The relative pronoun *who* is often very erroneously put in its objective form even by persons whose grammar is commonly correct. "I saw the man *whom*, they thought, was dead." The parenthetic clause *they thought*, we see, on a moment's reflection, does not alter the relation of the relative to its verb *was*, hence it should be, "I saw the man *who*," etc. No one would say, "I saw the man *whom* was dead."

"The younger Harper *whom* [who], they agree, was rather nice-looking."

"The two individuals [persons?] *whom* [who], he thought, were far away."

"Nina was annoyed by the presence of Mr. Jekyl, *whom* [who] her brother insisted should remain to dinner."

"Mr. and Mrs. Oswell, *whom* [who], I thought, were most delightful people."

"A quiet and steady boy, *whom* [who], I firmly believe, never sinned in word, thought, or act."

"Friday, *whom* [who], he thinks, would be better than a dog, and almost as good as a pony."

"The Record has not ceased its attacks on Bishop Jackson, *whom* [who], it fears, may be translated to the See of London."

**Whose.** Mr. George Washington Moon discountenances the use of *whose* as the possessive of *which*. He says, "The best writers, when speaking of inanimate objects, use *of which* instead of *whose*." The correctness of this statement is doubtful. The truth is, I think, that good writers use that form for the possessive case of *which* that in their judgment is, in each particular case, the more euphonious, giving the preference, perhaps, to *of which*. On this subject Dr. Campbell says: "The possessive of *who* is properly *whose*. The pronoun *which*, originally indeclinable, had no possessive. This was supplied, in the common periphrastic manner, by the help of the preposition and the article. But, as this could not fail to enfeeble the expression, when so much time was given to mere conjunctives, all our best authors, both in prose and verse, have now come regularly to adopt, in such cases, the possessive of *who*, and thus have substituted one syllable in the room of three, as in the example following: 'Philosophy, *whose* end is to instruct us in the knowledge of nature,' for 'Philosophy, *the end of which* is to instruct us.' Some grammarians remonstrate; but it ought to be remembered that use, well established, must give law to grammar, and not grammar to use."

Professor Bain says; "*Whose*, although the possessive

of *who*, and practically of *which*, is yet frequently employed for the purpose of restriction: 'We are the more likely to guard watchfully against those faults *whose* deformity we have seen fully displayed in others.' This is better than 'the deformity *of which* we have seen.' 'Propositions of *whose* truth we have no certain knowledge.'—Locke."

Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall says that the use of *whose* for *of which*, where the antecedent is not only irrational but inanimate, has had the support of high authority for several hundred years.

**Widowhood.** There is good authority for using this word in speaking of men as well as of women.

**Widow woman.** Since widows are always women, why say a widow *woman*? It would be correct to say a *widowed* woman.

**Will—Would.** These two auxiliaries are continually misused in conversation and in the newspapers. Here are some examples, gathered chiefly from the newspapers:

"The Japanese said they thought they *would* [should] be in Peking on Nov. 30."

"Warden Sage said that he *would* [should] not put Buchanan . . . ; he said that he *would* [should] be governed," etc.—N. Y. Evening Sun.

"We *would* [should] not grieve if immigration were to decline."—N. Y. Sun.

"Lawyer Gibbons said that he had not decided what course he *would* [should] pursue; he was certain, however, that he *would* [should] do nothing right away."—N. Y. Evening Sun.

"They feel confident that out of the 3,500 men they *will* [shall] be able to cull talent that *shall* [will] send the department ahead."—N. Y. Evening Sun,

"If that be conservative ground, all we have to say is that we *would* [should] like to see," etc.

"They have a great many fine old jewels in London, but I *would* [should] not be surprised," etc.

"Commissioner Andrews announced that he *would* [should] call a special meeting."—N. Y. Sun.

"Commissioner Grant said he *would* [should] vote for Commissioner Roosevelt for president."—N. Y. Sun.

"They *would* [should] have a meeting to-day, he said."—N. Y. Sun.

"He thought he *would* [should] be able to tell the public," etc.

"I thought I *would* [should] go wild with anguish."

"Such being the case, I *would* [should] rather not talk. We *will* [shall] simply move for a new trial. We *will* [shall] have to see how that motion ends."

"The Parade Committee sent a message saying that they *would* [should] be glad to furnish a carriage for him."

"We *would* [should] not wonder if we were told," etc.

"My broker came to me, and told me that I *would* [should] have to put up more margin."

"He said he did not know yet whether or not he *would* [should] plead guilty."

"He said he *would* [should] have an investigation made."

"As we parted he grasped my hand, and said he *would* [should] look for my speedy recovery."

"A man asked me to-day if we *would* [should] like some squirrels."

"The justice said he was sorry, but that he *would* [should] have to commit him."

"Mrs. Winchester believes that when her house is finished she *will* [shall] die."—N. Y. Sun.



"The cashier said that he *would* [should] not have hesitated to *have paid* [pay] the money."

"He says the battle is hard, but he thinks he *will* [shall] win."—Headline, N. Y. Sun.

"We know that our Defender is a good fair-weather boat, and *would* [should] like to know how she *would* [will] behave when the white caps are out."—N. Y. Sun.

"If any of the great powers . . . we *would* [should] have been at war," etc.—St. James Gazette.

"The Bannocks and Shoshones have just given notice that they *will* [shall] demand from the Government fulfillment of the treaty of 1868, and *will* [shall] insist on protection in the exercise of their rights."

"Follow the dictates of your own patriotic impulse and business instincts, and we *will* [shall] be all right."—N. Y. Sun.

"*Will* [shall] we come to this dress suit?"—N. Y. Sun.

"Mr. Bonner told his family that he did not know exactly how long he *would* [should] be away, but said that he *would* [should] be back in time to spend the Christmas holidays, if possible."—N. Y. Sun.

"Gen. Schofield said that he *will* [should] go out of town on a visit over Sunday, and *will* [should] return on Tuesday."—N. Y. Evening Sun.

"Otherwise, they declare, they *would* [should] have beaten the Vigilant more."—N. Y. Sun.

In the first person, the *bare fact of futurity* is always expressed by *shall*. "I *shall* go to Philadelphia to-morrow." "He says he *shall* go to Philadelphia to-morrow." "He said he *should* go to Philadelphia to-morrow." We use *will* in the first person when we *promise, or express determination*, and only then,

"I *will* not die alone"—i. e., I am determined that others shall die with me. "I *shall* not die alone"—i. e., events will cause others to die with me.

"I *will* go to Philadelphia in spite of you." "He says he *will* go to Philadelphia in spite of you." "He said he *would* go to Philadelphia in spite of you." Determination.

"We *would* [should] hate to hear of the slaughter of any of our countrymen in Cuba."—N. Y. Sun.

"The use of *will* in the sentence, 'We will publish the correct reading in our next number,' is perfectly correct. It expresses present intention of a future act."—N. Y. Evening Sun. Not so. In the first person, simple intention is expressed with *shall*. See SHALL and WILL.

**Without.** This word is often improperly used instead of *unless*; as, "You will never live to my age *without* you keep yourself in breath and exercise." "I shall not go *without* my father consents": properly, *unless* my father consents, or, *without* my father's consent.

"It has brought me here, Sara, and I can not leave you *without* you promise that you will not become the wife of a man who drinks": should be, "without your promise," or, "unless you promise."

"You know my uncle declared he would not suffer me to return *without* [unless] my mamma desired it."

**Woman.** "John Brown, having been sent the other day at Balmoral by the Queen in quest of the lady in waiting, who happened to be the Duchess of Athole, suddenly stumbled against her. 'Hoot, mam,' cried J. B., 'ye're just the woman I was looking for.' The enraged Duchess dashed incontinently into the royal presence and exclaimed to her Majesty: 'Madame, J. B. has insulted me; he has had the impertinence to call me a woman.' To which the

Queen replied, 'And pray, what are you?'—N. Y. Sun. See LADY ; also GENTLEMAN.

**Worst.** We should say *at the worst*, not *at worst*.

**Worst kind.** A vulgarism that we sometimes hear used in the sense of *very much*. "I want to go *the worst kind* [very much]."

**Wove.** The past participle of the verb *to weave* is *woven*. "Where was this cloth *woven*?"—not *wove*.

**You are mistaken.** See MISTAKEN.

**You was.** Good usage does, and it is to be hoped always will, consider *you was* a gross vulgarism, certain grammarians to the contrary notwithstanding. *You* is the form of the pronoun in the second person plural, and must, if we would speak correctly, be used with the corresponding form of the verb. The argument that we use *you* in the singular number is so nonsensical that it does not merit a moment's consideration. It is a custom we have—and have in common with other peoples—to speak to one another in the second person plural, and that is all there is of it. The Germans speak to one another in the *third* person plural. The exact equivalent in German of our *How are you?* is, *How are they?*

**Yours, &c.** The ignorant and obtuse not infrequently profess themselves at the bottom of their letters "Yours, &c." And so forth ! forth what ? Few other vulgarisms are equally offensive, and none could be more offensive. In printing correspondence, the newspapers often content themselves with this shorthand way of intimating that the writer's name was abbreviated by some one of the familiar forms of ending letters; this an occasional dunderhead seems to think is sufficient authority for writing himself, *Yours, &c.*

**Amateur—Novice.** There is much confusion in the use of these two words, although they are entirely distinct from each other in meaning. An *amateur* is one versed in, or a lover and practicer of, any particular pursuit, art, or science, but *not* engaged in it professionally. A *novice* is one who is new or inexperienced in any art or business—a beginner, a tyro. A professional actor, then, who is new and unskilled in his art, is a *novice*, and not an *amateur*. An amateur may be an artist of great experience and extraordinary skill.

**Answer—Reply.** These two words should not be used indiscriminately. An *answer* is given to a question; a *reply*, to an assertion. When we are addressed, we *answer*; when we are accused, we *reply*. We *answer* letters, and *reply* to any arguments, statements, or accusations they may contain. Crabb is in error in saying that *replies* "are used in personal discourse only." *Replies*, as well as *answers*, are written. We very properly write, "I have now, I believe, *answered* all your questions and *replied* to all your arguments." A *rejoinder* is made to a *reply*. "Who goes there?" he cried, and receiving no *answer*, he fired. "The advocate *replied* to the charges made against his client."

**Effectuate.** This word, together with *ratiocinate* and *eventuate*, is said to be a great favorite with the rural members of the Arkansas Legislature.

**Language.** A note in Worcester's Dictionary says: "*Language* is a very general term, and is not strictly confined to utterance by words, as it is also expressed by the countenance, by the eyes, and by signs. *Tongue* refers especially to an original language; as, 'the Hebrew *tongue*.' The modern languages are derived from the original *tongues*."

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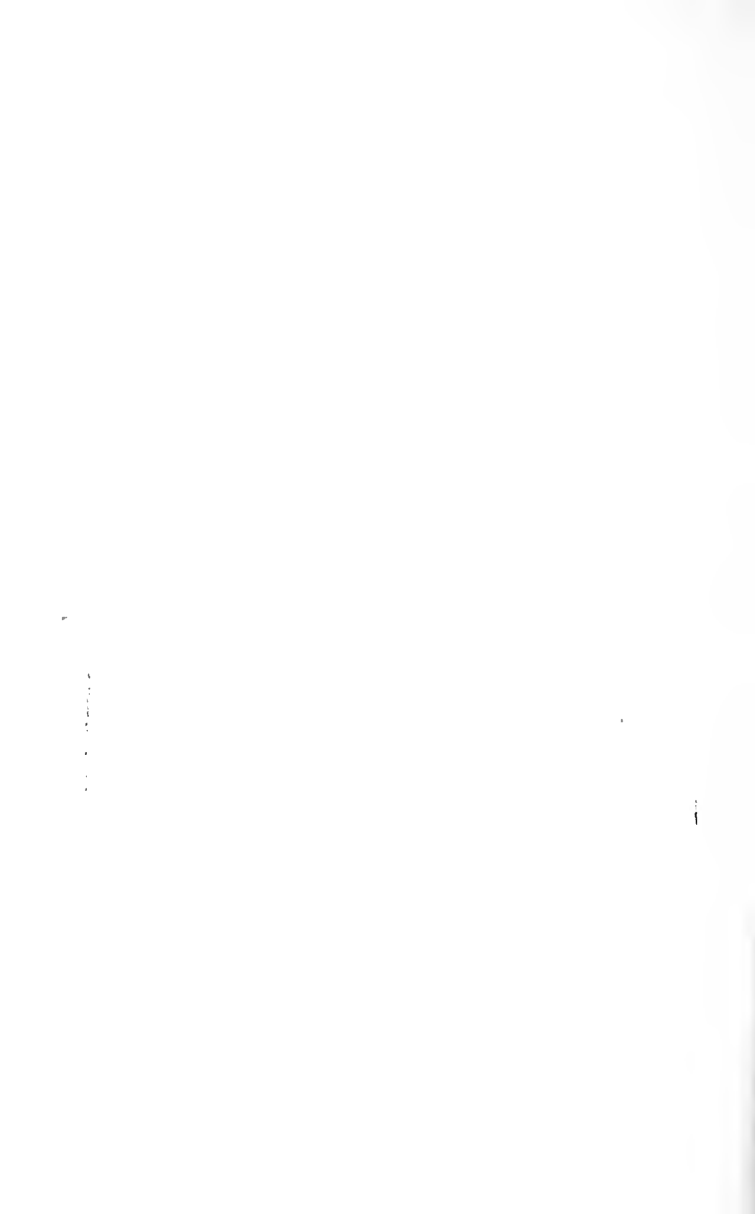
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